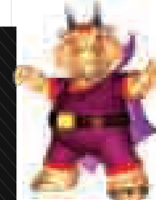
OLD!

BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO CLASSIC GAMES

retro* GAMER™

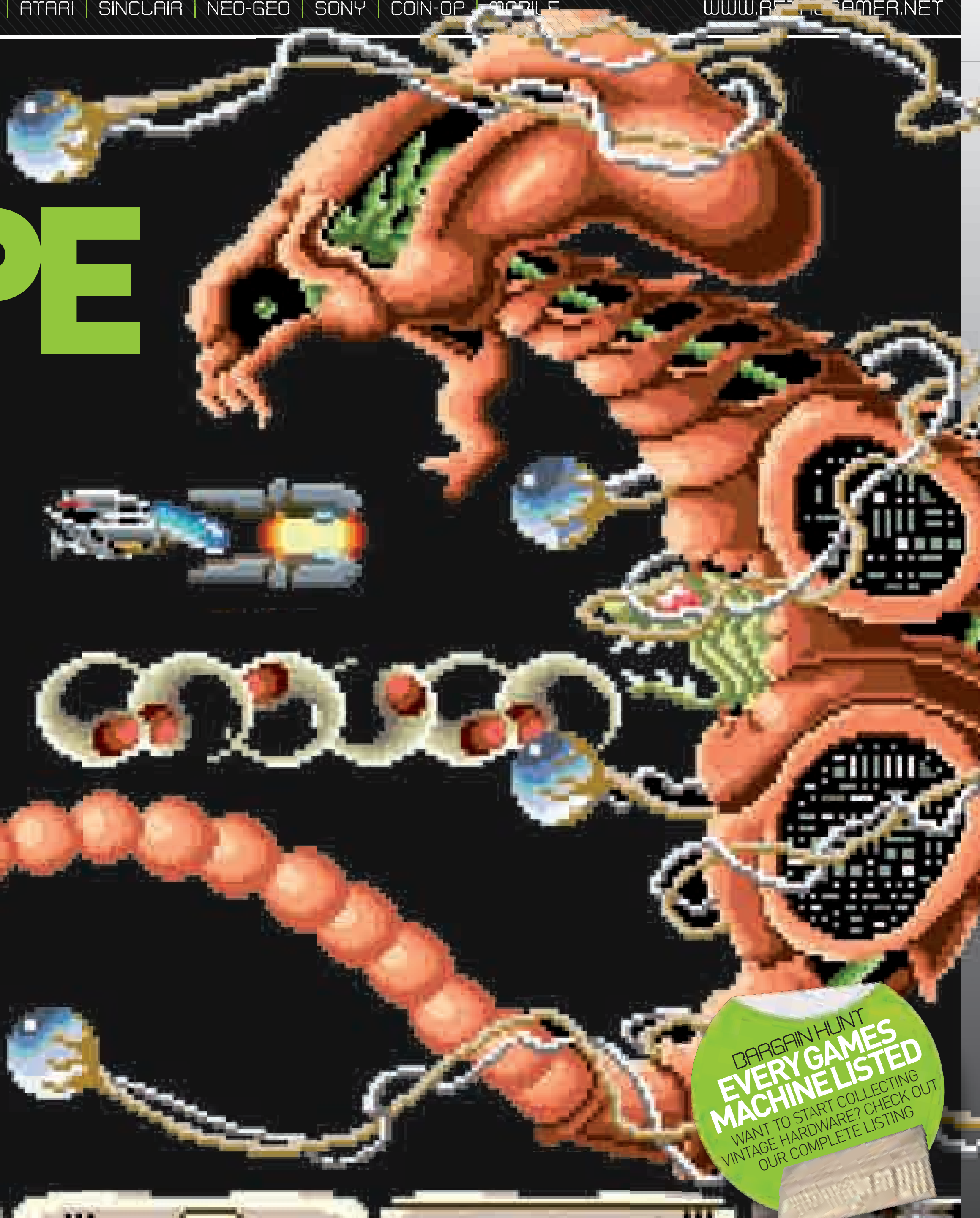


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R-TYPE
THE COMPLETE LOWDOWN

BEHIND THE SCENES
THE MAKING OF TURRICAN
MANFRED TRENZ DISPELS ALL THE MYTHS SURROUNDING HIS C64 HIT

INSIDE:
MR DO!
RETRO GAMER CASTS ITS LOVING GAZE OVER A FORGOTTEN CLASSIC

WARREN DAVIS
Q*BERT'S CREATOR IS THE LATEST CASTAWAY TO GET WASHED ASHORE

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SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
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BARGAIN HUNT
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TEAM 17
MARTYN BROWN AND MARCUS DYSON OPEN UP AN OLD CAN OF WORMS

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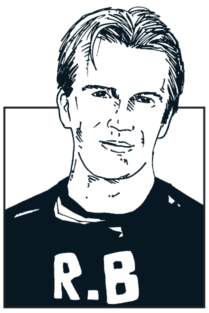
THE RETROBATES

MY FIRST GAMING SYSTEM



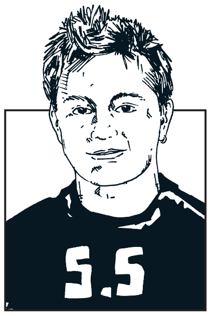
ADAM DAWES

It was a Commodore PET for me, a magical box of tricks that left me spellbound. I had a brilliant space invaders game, but it was *Nightmare Park* that got me really hooked!
Expertise: C64, Amiga, Arcade, Remakes
Currently playing: Fable: The Lost Chapters
Favourite game of all time: Bubble Bobble



RICHARD BURTON

That would be the Interstate 1165 TV Game featuring football, hockey, tennis and squash complete with lightgun. All games were just *Pong* with varying numbers of sticks.
Expertise: Anything Manic Miner or Jet Set Willy related
Currently playing: Get Dexter
Favourite game of all time: Manic Miner



SPANNER

The G7000 introduced me to videogames, and I still own (and play) it to this day. *K.C. Munchkin* and *Quest For The Rings* are still kick ass cool!
Expertise: I just play the games
Currently playing: Alien Hominid
Favourite game of all time: Double Dragon



JOHN SZCZEPANIAK

The Famicom. It was the system that influenced my tastes for years to come, and also started my fascination with Japanese games. Thank you, original gold, white, and burgundy Famicom!
Expertise: Japanese Consoles
Currently playing: Robotron 64
Favourite game of all time: Star Control 2



PAUL DRURY

Battlestar Galactica Space Alert in 1978. I finally found another at CGEuk and as I stared once more at those tiny red LED lights, I started to well up. The vendor just smiled and said, 'I know'.
Expertise: Getting old programmers to confess their drug habits.
Currently playing: Jumpbug
Favourite game of all time: Sheep in Space



MIKE TOOLEY

Phillips Videopac. Over eighty games all inspired or unwittingly borrowed from the arcade. It was a simple machine from a simpler time.
Expertise: Games that few have heard of and less have played.
Currently playing: Area 51 and Darius Gaiden
Favourite game of all time: Mr Do!



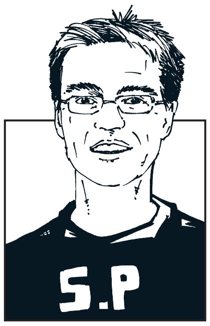
CRAIG GRANNELL

My first games machine was an Atari 400 (complete with dodgy membrane keyboard and chunk-o-carts).
Expertise: Systems/games where you don't need 37 fingers to use the controller.
Currently playing: Mario Kart DS
Favourite game of all time: H.E.R.O.



SHAUN BEBBINGTON

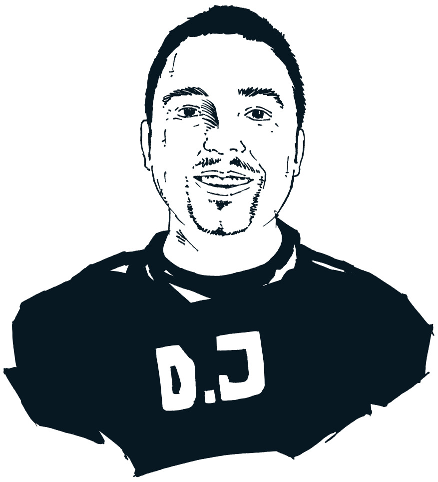
My first games machine was the Texas TI99/4a. Although most games were typed in by hand and were a bit rubbish, *TI Invaders*, *Parsec* and *Munch Man* more than made up for that!
Expertise: Commodore 64 and other 8-bit computers
Currently playing: Trailblazer
Favourite game of all time: Turrican



SIMON PHILLIPS

I remember first owning a cartridge-based pretender to the Atari 2600. However, it wasn't long before I badgered my folks into buying me the proper 'woody' wonder.
Expertise: Sleeplessness, nappies and feigning alertness.
Currently playing: Quick goes on just about any handheld game
Favourite game of all time: TLOZ: Ocarina of Time

LOADING...



With all the rush in getting January's issue out, I totally forgot to tell you about our future plans for Retro Gamer, so let's share them with you now.

After listening to feedback from various letters and emails and our actual forum (www.retrogamer.net/forum), we've discovered that the majority of you want as much new content as possible. We'll still keep the retrospectives that many of you enjoy, but we'll also be adding plenty of brand new interviews with veterans from the industry in order to keep *Retro Gamer* feeling nice and fresh.

Want to hear about Nolan Bushnell's first steps in the industry and what he's currently up to? Then turn to page 58. Fancy reading about the true origin of classic Commodore 64 hit *Turrican*? Manfred Trenz, *Turrican's* creator, spills the beans on page 70. Want to know what *Q*Bert* creator Warren Davis' favourite games are? The answers can be found on page 76.

Of course, there's plenty more in the issue for you to discover and enjoy…



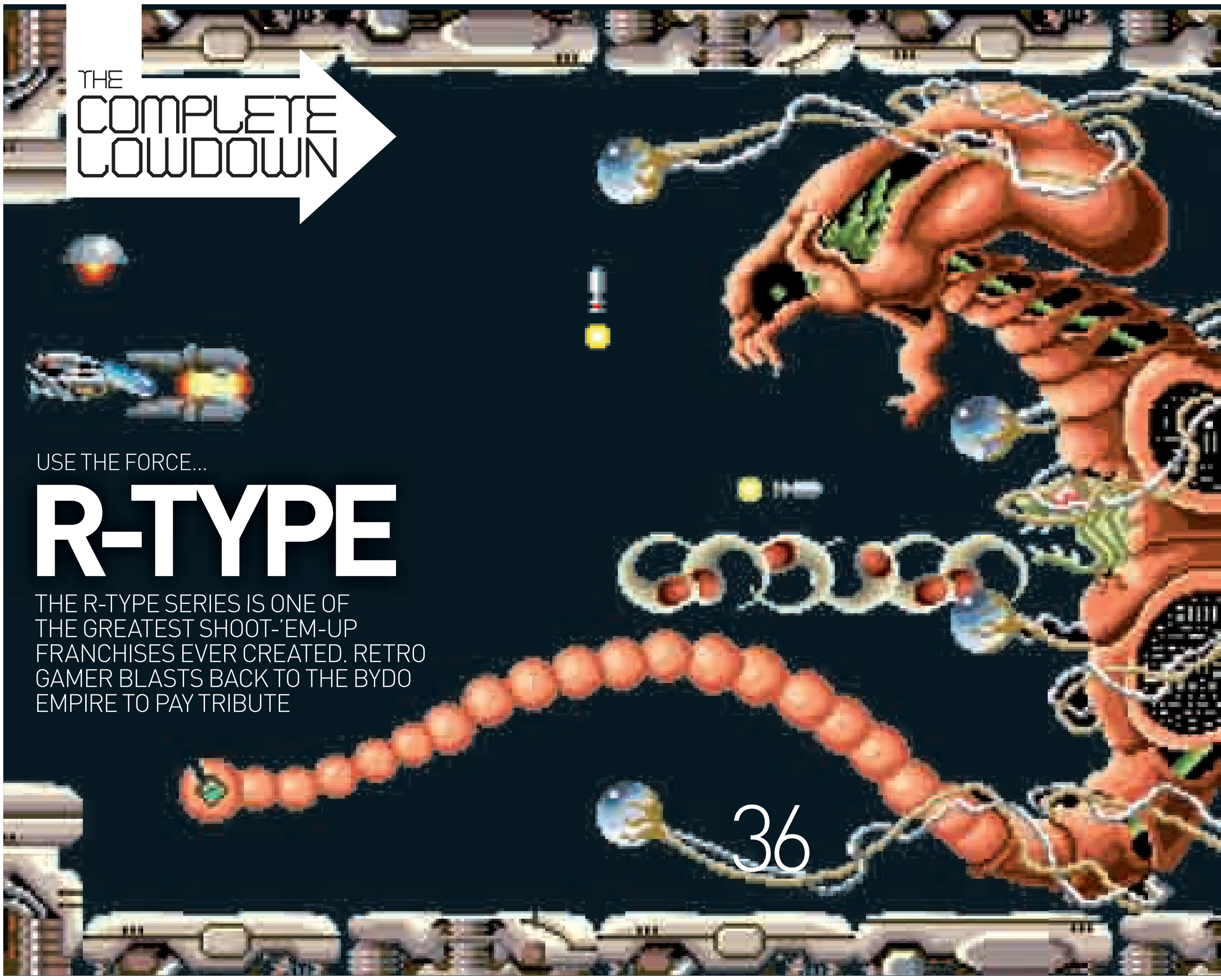




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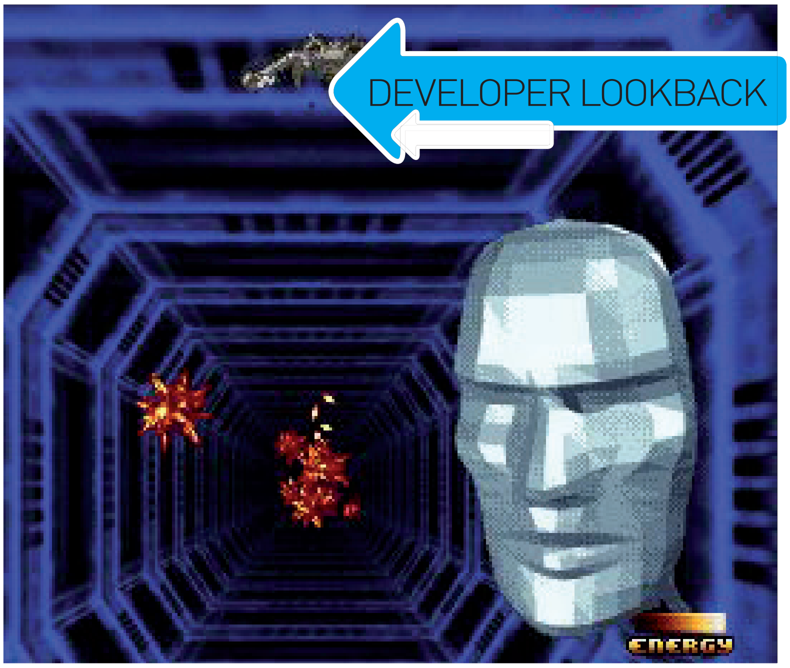
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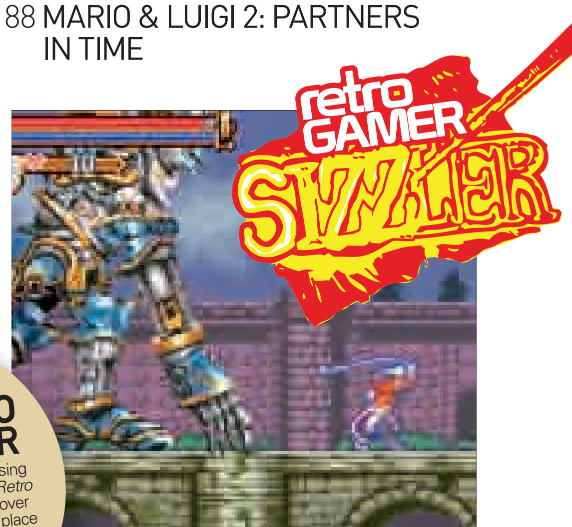
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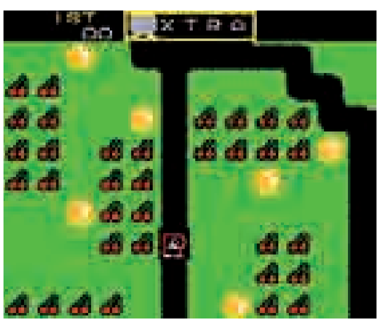




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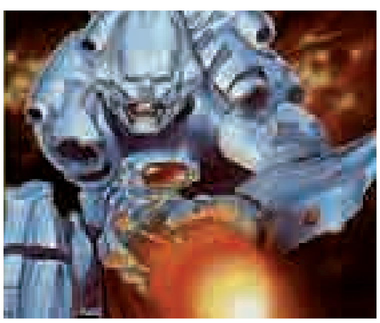
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CLASSIC GAME

MR DO!

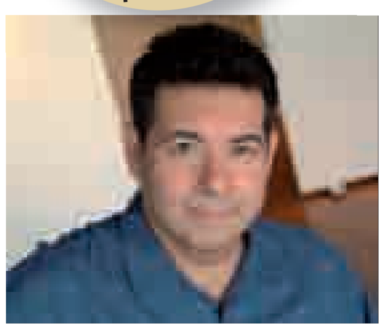
52 Mr Do! lit up the arcades in 1982. Part maze game, part everything else, Mr Do! was unlike anything else around and all the better for it



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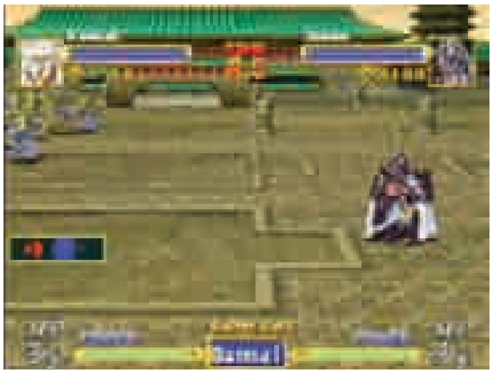
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This month's remake is a rather spiffy version of David Crane's Pitfall! II. Bloody good it is too…

100 **HIGH SCORE**
The return of an old favourite with a fresh new look

RETRORADAR





» **Left:** Never mind the cute characters, Popful Mail was typical of Working Designs' output and is typical of its Mega CD output
Right: The Saturn's Dragon Force was one of the few Working Design games to get published in the UK. Despite it's hefty price it's an essential purchase

THE GUIDE

What's hot this issue…

END OF AN ERA

SAD DAYS FOR RPG FANS AS WORKING DESIGNS FINALLY CLOSES

It's always sad when a developer decides to call time on the industry, but when it's one as respected much as Working Designs it's particularly bitter.

Formed in 1986 by Todd Mark and Sylvia Schmitt, Working Designs originally focused on creating marketing and accounting software for the PC. Sadly, Mark died in 1988, and Victor Ireland (or Vic as he's more affectionately known) was hired to continue Mark's work. Thanks to Ireland's love of games Working Designs decided to enter the videogame market, and in 1991 it signed its first publishing deal with Taito Corp to localise and release Parasol Stars for the Turbografx-16 (or PC Engine as it's known in Japan). More deals quickly followed and it quickly became synonymous with RPGs, due to the many localisations it produced. *Popful Mail, Alundra, Lunar: Silver Star Story, Shining Wisdom* and *Dragon Force* are just a few of the titles Working Designs has translated in its 19-year career, and while there were sometimes lengthy waits, the humorous translations and loving attention to detail always made them worthwhile. *Growlanser Generations* for Sony's PlayStation2 was Working Design's final release, and after a long period of silence Ireland finally posted news of the closure on the company's website.

"Working Designs is gone. All the staff has been laid off and the office is closed and has been for some time," explained the post. "The most frustrating part of all of this is that I know that our fanbase is still there. *Growlanser Generations* sold well, but of course not better than it would have sold as two separate titles. We just spent too much time fighting the good fight and trying to get other games approved."

While Ireland was sure to not openly criticise anyone in his post, it was obvious that the continued delay of Working Design's *Goemon* translation for the PlayStation2 was a particular sticking point. "Though almost finished and substantially improved from the Japanese release, *Goemon* is dead for the US, and that was really the final straw," he continued. "If I can't guarantee that the games I personally choose for us to release in the US can actually get approved and come out, there's no business to be done. There is a possibility that it may be released in Europe (as well as *Growlanser Generations*), but nothing is finalised yet."

While a sad chapter (especially for those with a fondness of RPGs) has now closed, Ireland is confident that you'll see him and many of the other Working Designs staff in the near future. "I will be working with some of the WD staff to do games for other publishers for the time being, but not as Working Designs," he explained. "There's some amazing stuff coming for the 360 in Japan, and I know I want it - I think you will, too." Let's hope we don't have too long to wait…

SONIC BOOM

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG SPEEDS ONTO MOBILE PHONES

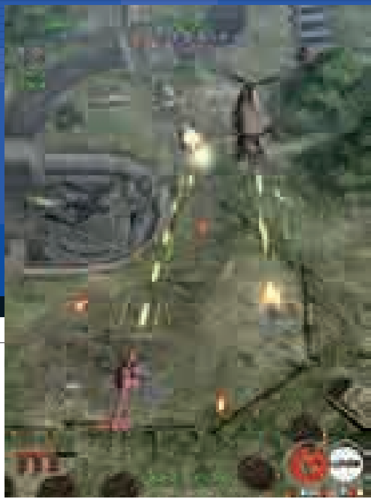


With Sonic fast approaching his 15th birthday iFone has announced a brand new mobile phone game that's due to be available from March.

Sonic the Hedgehog Part 1 will contain the first three zones from Sonic's first ever Mega Drive outing and is already looking like an amazingly faithful conversion of the classic hit. Green Hill Zone, Spring Yard Zone and Star Light Zone are all due to be included, with the remaining levels to appear on Part 2 later this year. iFone and Sega promise all the original enemies, authentic showdowns with Dr Robotnik (or Eggman as he's now commonly referred to) and, of course, those fantastic tunes that helped make *Sonic* a household name. iFone is also going to include special Easter Eggs, including brand new alternative endings for fans to track down. We're expecting great things from this conversion, so expect a full review in next month's issue.



» Green Hill Zone in the palm of your hand, what more could you possibly want?



» Just when we thought the Dreamcast is no more… Another quality game appears and it's a shooter. Hooray!

KEEP DREAMING

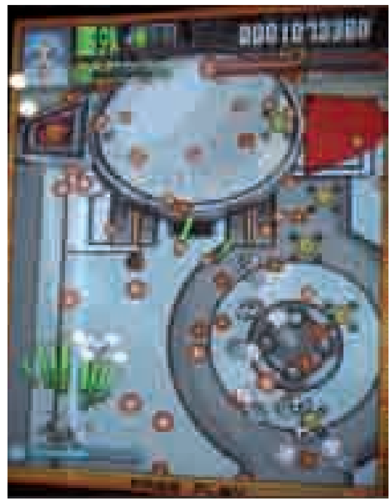
DREAMCAST TO RECEIVE TWO MORE GAMES FOR 2005

It seems that Sega's 128-bit super console refuses to die, as two more games will be appearing on it in the next few months. Oh, and they're both shooters.

Milestone's *Radilgy* has already appeared on Sega's Naomi arcade board and is now due to appear on the Dreamcast, making it the first (and possibly only) console to receive a port of this interesting-looking shooter. Utilising a distinctive cel-shaded look, *Radilgy* sports superb music, a decent weapons system and plenty of hardcore action that is bound to go down a storm with bullet dodgers the world over. The Western market may not be too keen to embrace the genre, but the shoot-'em-up refuses to die in Japan and we for one are grateful.

It's due to be released on 16 February and can be bought directly from Sega at its Sega Direct store, or from websites such as PlayAsia.com. Interestingly, Sega Direct is also selling the game with a refurbished Dreamcast, so if you've always wondered what all the fuss about Sega's console was about, there's never been a better time to find out.

The second title due to hit Sega's wonderful console is G-Rev's *Under Defeat*. As with *Radilgy*, *Under Defeat* uses Sega's Naomi board and has already been released to great success in Japanese arcades. Due for release in March, *Under Defeat* will be available in two versions, a bog-standard release of just the game, and a Limited Edition that will include a CD soundtrack. Past experience has shown that the Limited Edition versions sell out extremely quickly, so if you're looking at the game as a future investment that's the version to go for.



» Cel-shaded visuals in a shoot-'em-up? Now that's something you don't see everyday…

FIGHT NIGHT

CAPCOM TO RELEASE STREET FIGHTER II ON XBOX LIVE ARCADE

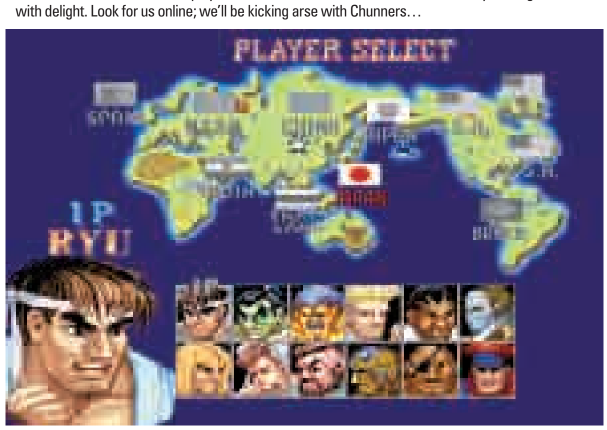
Forget Kameo, Perfect Dark Zero and Call of Duty 2 on Microsoft's new 360; all our time has been spent on Xbox Live Arcade.

For those unaware (or unable to still purchase a machine) Xbox Live Arcade allows you to download a variety of games for a set cost and store them safely on your hard drive for future enjoyment. While titles like *Geometry Wars: Evolved*, *Mutant Storm Reloaded* and *Bankshot Billiards 2* play have plenty in common with older games, Microsoft has wisely allowed companies to make old arcade hits of yesteryear available as well.

Midway's *Gauntlet*, *Smash TV*, *Robotron: 2084* and *Joust* are all currently available and Microsoft has plenty of other big publishers lined up for the future. First up is Capcom, and while we were a little disappointed that it's converting *Street Fighter II Hyper Fighting* (and not the astounding *Third Strike*) it is adding plenty of new features to ensure that it's the definitive version of the brawler. *Hyper Fighting's* most attractive addition is its new 'Quarter Match' mode. Not only does it effectively allow you to book the next game, it also lets you watch a current match, chat with other gamers who are watching, or even trash talk those who are currently playing. It's a great idea and effectively allows you to recapture the spirit of hanging out with your mates in your local arcade, let's hope more Xbox Live Arcade games start using it. Add in a very comprehensive leaderboard that offers plenty of different ranking systems and *Street Fighter II Hyper Fighting* is already looking like an essential purchase when it's released later this year.

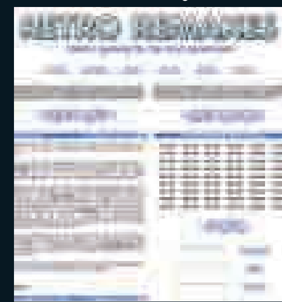


» Whilst we'd love to be able to play the wonderful *Third Strike* online this is already making us shiver with delight. Look for us online; we'll be kicking arse with Chunners…



» Would you want to go up against somebody that looks at hard as Ryu? We certainly wouldn't , but then we abhor fighting (unless we know we're going to win)

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH



EVERY MONTH RETRO GAMER WILL TAKE A LOOK AT ONE OF ITS FAVOURITE WEBSITES. THIS MONTH IT'S THE OUTSTANDING RETRO REMAKES, A WONDERFUL REMAKE SITE WITH A FANTASTIC COMMUNITY.

If you've been checking out the retro scene news in each issue of Retro Gamer you'll already be well aware of the many great remakes of classic games that are continually being made. If you're interested in finding out a little more about them, you may want to head on over to Retro Remakes.

As well as hosting the recent Remakes competition (the results of which were announced at last year's Retro Ball, Retro Remakes features a friendly forum, an excellent fanzine called Rewind, and of course, lots of lovely remakes for you to peruse.

There's a constant barrage of new games being announced and coders are always looking for help on new projects, so if you think you may be able to help then head on over to http://www.retroremakes.com

LOADING SCREEN OF THE MONTH

NO.3: GAME OVER

Call us sad, but when we were hormonally challenged 14-year-olds in 1987 we thought that *Game Over* was one of the greatest games ever made. So what made it so special we hear you ask? Well, it wasn't the great graphics, great weapons and interesting game mechanics; it was simply because you could see a woman's nipple on the loading screen. Simple things and all that…





AMERICA FREE RETRO★

YOUR U.S. TAKE ON THE RETRO SCENE WITH RETRO GAMING RADIO'S SHANE R MONROE



GETTING BACK TO BASICS

Why do you think that many people who were diehard gamers in the eighties suddenly stopped playing games? I know what you're thinking… Gaming has never been better and people that had an affinity for game playing then are SURELY still playing games now, right? The media would have you believe that gaming has exploded into a giant marketplace filled with a huge population of gamers. But, Nolan Bushnell, the godfather of gaming, recently said that in the late seventies, almost 40 per cent of the population were gaming. We are now a population of a lowly 15 per cent gamers. So what happened?

Games have changed a lot over the years – and so have the people that play them. We started with *Pong*: simplistic graphics with an even more simplistic control scheme – a simple spinner. Now, we have million dollar titles spanning gigabytes of data with 12+ buttons and three separate directional controllers. With this sort of 'evolution', is it really any wonder why so many gamers have been led astray?

Pong, right along with *Pac-Man* and *Asteroids*, enslaved a generation. Women identified with getting eaten three times for a quarter on *Ms. Pac-Man* or found solace in *Centipede* and *Frogger*. A generation of people evolved through the local arcade – young and old alike. Pop culture was redefined. We skipped out of our daily duties like school or work to play games. Japan almost declared a national holiday as rooms once filled with pachinko machines were now packed wall-to-wall with *Space Invaders* cabinets – causing coin shortages all over the country. Popularity on the American playground was decided by who had a Colecovision instead of an Atari 2600. We cared more about which videogame system had the best version of *Donkey Kong* than what was happening on the TV.

Then, somewhere along the way, gaming kind of went out of vogue – underground almost – becoming all but a niche hobby. Until bloody heads could be kicked around the screen with realistic brains splattering the virtual camera, gaming was isolated and pretty much reduced to "kid's play". Some of us, of course, stuck around – playing excellent computer games on our Amigas until the rest of the world finally caught up. This is not to say that gaming died altogether, but many people couldn't be bothered with gaming again until 24 hit combos with fatalities showed up.

Based on what the media would have you believe, gaming is more mainstream now than ever. But we've lost soldiers from our army of gamers, folks. As gaming became more complicated and time consuming (you know, like work), those looking for the rush of the arcade quick fix of the eighties simply didn't evolve. Some turned to emulation on the home computer. Many turned to handhelds. Some simply left and attributed their departure from gaming as "growing out of it".

I believe these fallen soldiers of ours are coming back thanks to some companies getting back to the basics. Simplistic, natural and accessible controls like motion sensors, touch screens and light guns being used as more than just gimmicks are bringing gaming back to its roots and old school gamers are coming back. Sales of these sort of 'grass roots' products like the Nintendo DS and the GP2x handheld along with dozens of TV Plug 'N' Play games prove the marketplace is ripe to court retro-style gamers.

I think we have a saturated market of gamers interested in the current breed of gaming. There are always going to be people that buy 'the latest and greatest' regardless of innovation (or lack thereof). I believe that this 'core audience' is finite in number and as gaming budgets and costs continue to skyrocket, companies are going to be forced to find gamers elsewhere – those that cannot or will not be dazzled by resolution or thrilled by





SHANE R MONROE IS THE PROUD OWNER OF POPULAR INTERNET RADIO SHOW, RETRO GAMING RADIO. HEAD ON OVER TO HTTP://WWW.RETROGAMINGRADIO.COM IF YOU WANT TO CATCH HIS LATEST SHOW.

more channels of surround sound.

Nintendo seems to be interested in courting the "non-gamer gamer" which is, in reality, the folks that used to play games but find the over-complexity of the games or their controls simply no longer any fun. Games like *Mario Kart* have stood the test of time and are again best sellers. Good for Nintendo for taking a chance on those of us too uncoordinated to perform UP-DOWN-X-Y-A-B-RIGHT-LEFT-UP-A-A-X-B in a two second time frame. Geezers of gaming? Maybe … or maybe we're interested in more than polygon count or the number of ways a head can be removed from the neck. Slap Nintendo around all you want – I think it is the last developer that really know what's going on in our industry – and its profit margins speak louder than words.

Some people say that with all the technology available that it's a great time to be a gamer. Me? I think it has ALWAYS been a good time to be a gamer, as great games don't rely on technology to carry them. Great games are great games in 1978 or 2008 and the concepts that carry these games will rise from the ashes and enthral another generation again once we've got back to basics.

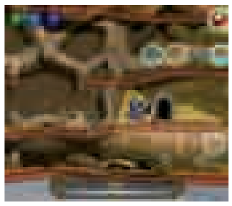
Keep it retro!
Shane

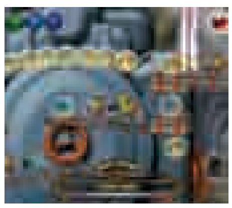
» GIVE US TWO MINUTES AND WE'LL GIVE YOU THE RETRO WORLD

RETRORADAR

BUBBLELICIOUS

BUB AND BOB PREPARE TO BOARD THE PSP









» The original *Bubble Bobble* in all its glory

Thanks to Taito Legends and the latest DS incarnation of *Bubble Bobble,* Taito's loveable dinosaurs are once again back in the limelight and delighting gamers the world over with their bubble blowing antics.

Rising Star Games, which has a few other retro titles on the way including *Rainbow Islands DS*, *Snowboard Kids DS* and *Lunar Genesis* on the way, has recently announced a brand new Bub and Bob adventure for the PSP, one that takes place in 3D.

While the core gameplay will essentially remain intact, plenty of new enhancements have been added to ensure that Bub and Bob's quaint antics will appeal to the more modern gamer.

Each level is now split over three screens that Bub and Bob can move between at will. The gameplay has also been altered and the two dinosaurs will have to do more than simply defeat their opponents in order to reach the next stage. Each level now features puzzles that need to be solved in order to progress and range from watering seeds to make them grow, to using fire to melt blocks of ice.

"This isn't *Bubble Bobble* as fans of the series are used to," explains Tony Byus, *Bubble Bobble Evolution's* producer. "This is an entirely new game and with these puzzle elements included, it's literally an evolution of the original game design concept."

Let's just hope it doesn't stray too far from what made the original game so great in the first place…

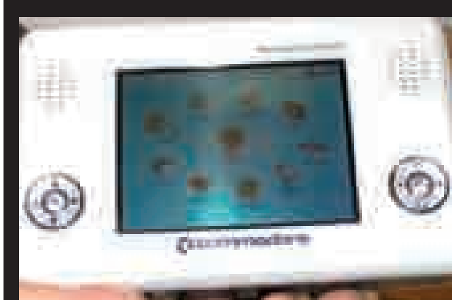
THE RETURN OF COMMODORE:
ALTHOUGH IT'S NOT HOW YOU'D EXPECT…

PALM POWER

Ever since Yeahronimo announced its three-step strategy for the Commodore brand last September we've been deliriously waiting for more news. The recent Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas has finally revealed all and it's very interesting to say the least.

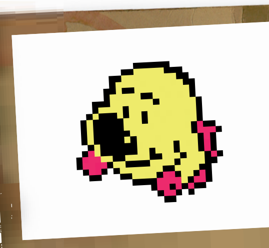
The Commodore Combo is a new handheld device that comes with a host of cool features, the most important being that it will play a variety of games. Interestingly, the machine is said to come pre-installed with five NES titles, with a further 90 being available to purchase online. The Combo will also feature MP3, MP4, GPS functionality, video playback, has a 20GB hard-drive and runs on Windows CE.

Yeahronimo is planning to allow owners to download new games and content from special kiosks installed in various retail outlets, although it is yet to mention which stores will be participating. While we're excited to see the return of the Commodore brand, we can't help but wonder how much of a success the Combo will be (particularly after witnessing the less than spectacular sales of the recent Gizmondo). No price point or release date has been announced, both of which are sure to be critical factors to the machine's eventual success. More news as and when we get it.



» A Commodore product that may not play Commodore games – has the world gone mad?

HERO OF THE MONTH



HEAD

Every month, *Retro Gamer* looks back at a classic videogame hero. This month it's Head, the jumping co-star of *Head Over Heels.*

First Appearance: *Head Over Heels*

Distinguishing Features: Oversized conk

Weapon of choice: Donut Gun

Most Likely to: Attach himself to Heels and overthrow the evil Blacktooth Empire

Least Likely to: Give Heels a piggyback

Unusual fact: The working title for *Head Over Heels* was the more unpleasant sounding 'Foot And Mouth'. Needless to say it quickly changed…

RETRO GAMER DIARY

EVENT HOSTING RETRO GAMER
IF YOU WANT RETRO GAMER TO PROMOTE UPCOMING GAMES AND EVENTS, DROP US A LINE AT RETROGAMER@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK

THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO…

Just because *Retro Gamer* looks to the past that doesn't mean that there aren't games and events to look forward to. Every month we'll be listing suitable games and events that you be adding to your 'to do' list.



FEBRUARY '06

GRADIUS PORTABLE

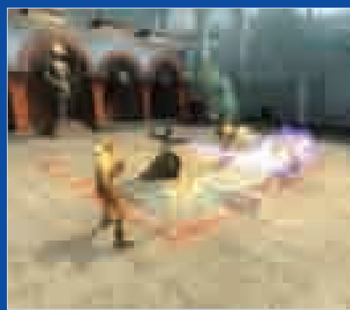
Released: 09 February (Japan)

Publisher: Konami

Price: 6,343 Yen

Format: PSP

Not long to wait now, the *Gradius* series has a fine heritage amongst shoot-'em-up fans and we're dying to see the final product. It's a real shame that no other titles have been announced, and it's also unclear if it will even arrive in the UK, but here's hoping that Konami does decide to release it here. Better keep those fingers crossed…



FEBRUARY '06

GAUNTLET: SEVEN SORROWS

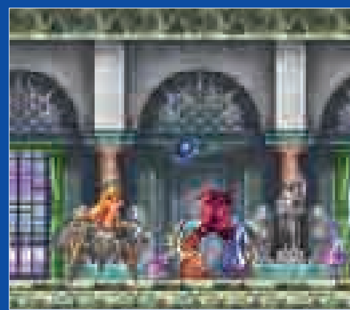
Released: 24 JFebruary

Publisher: Midway

Price: £39.99

Format: PS2, Xbox, PC

Midway's new offering features plenty of RPG elements, a much-needed online play option and even the touch of John Romero (although he's since left the project). Will it capture the success of the original game, or be a complete abortion like last year's *NARC*? Only time will tell…



FEBRUARY '06

CASTLEVANIA DOUBLE PACK

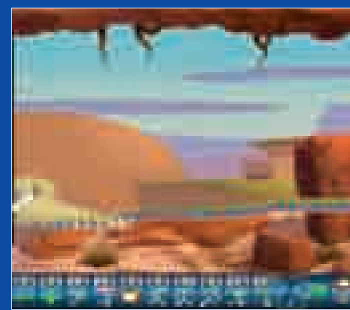
Released: 24 February

Publisher: Konami

Price: £34.99

Format: Game Boy Advance

If you're a fan of the classic Castlevania franchise then prepare to be very happy. Those lovely people at Konami are including past Game Boy Advance hits *Harmony of Dissonance* and *Aria of Sorrow* on a single GBA cart. All that we need now is for *Ninja Cop* to be repackaged…



FEBRUARY '06

LEMMINGS

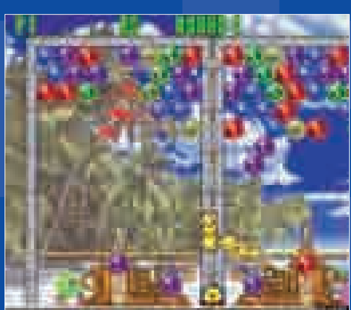
Released: 03 February

Publisher: Sony

Price: £34.99

Format: PSP

Ok, there's no denying that it would work perfectly on Nintendo's DS, but we're also hopeful that Team17 will do an excellent job with *Lemmings* on the PSP. The SNES version in particular was a very good console conversion, so here's hoping that the PSP version is going to be just as playable. Look out for a review very soon.



MARCH '06

TAITO LEGENDS II

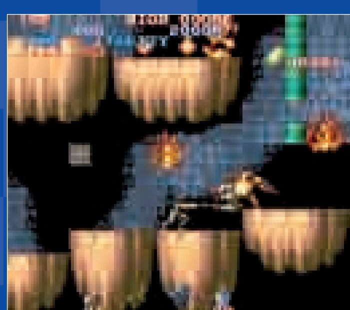
Released: March

Publisher: Xplosiv

Price: £19.99

Format: PS2, Xbox, PC

Taito Legends is easily our most anticipated compilation of all time. Hell, it could well be the best compilation of all time. Don't believe us? Then wait until you play *Elevator Action Returns, Cameltry, Don Doko Don* and *Puzzle Bobble 2* and the 30-odd other games it features. You can read the definitive review next issue.



MARCH '06

CAPCOM CLASSICS REMIXED

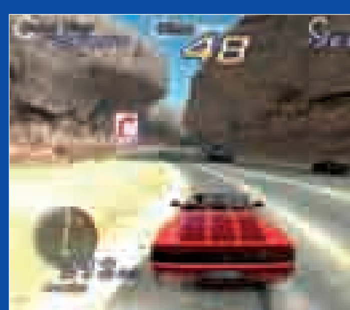
Released: March

Publisher: Capcom

Price: £34.99

Format: PSP

Although Capcom isn't going to be releasing all the titles that featured on its recent *Capcom Classics collection*, this is still looking like a must-have buy. *Strider, Black Tiger, Magic Sword, Three Wonders*, the list of great games is seemingly endless, making this another essential purchase.



MARCH '06

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST

Released: March

Publisher: Sega

Price: £39.99

Format: PSP, PS2, PC

We're not too sure why Sega isn't announcing an Xbox version, but we're more than a little excited about playing *OutRun* in the palm of our hands. Sega is keeping predictably tight-lipped about its latest project, but you can guarantee that another collaboration with Sumo Digital is bound to be magical.



MARCH '06

SEGA AGES: TREASURE BOX

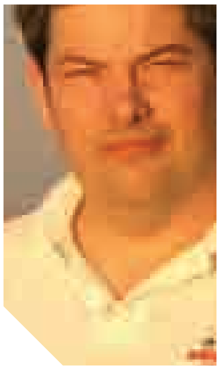
Released: March

Publisher: Sega

Price: TBC

Format: PS2

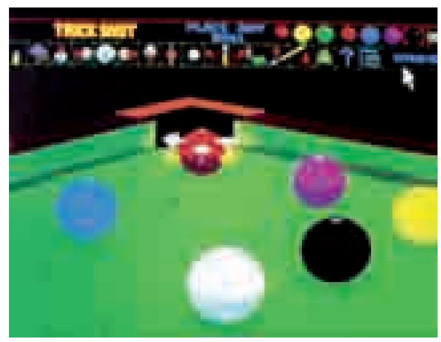
We've still no idea as to whether *Treasure Box* will be home to remakes of Treasure's past Mega Drive hits, or if they'll simply be emulated versions. Either way, if Treasure doesn't mess with the gameplay then there's no need to worry. In the meantime we'll simply dream of a Saturn compilation…





» Snooker can ruin your health: Who said that snooker celebrities were boring… They've obviously never been out with Jimmy White

"SHE ADMITTED THAT HE WASN'T THERE BECAUSE HE'D GONE OUT FOR A DRINK… LAST MONDAY!" ARCHER MACLEAN



» This never happened on the Masters

COMMENT

MISSING THE PINK

MUSINGS FROM THE MIND OF MACLEAN

And no, that's not a spelling mistake. You see, this anecdote is about the terrible effects of drink-snookering and how it can ruin your gameplay. Although in my case it won't help either way, as I'm better at writing snooker games than playing the real thing.

You see, me and my mate Jimmy White were supposed to be doing a six-minute live appearance on ITV's Saturday morning show *Motormouth* back in 1991, to promote *Jimmy Whites Whirlwind Snooker* for the Amiga and Atari ST (*Motormouth* has sort of evolved into *Ministry of Mayhem* nowadays). Anyway, we were supposed to be filmed with me doing a clear-up on the computer game, while Jimmy raced around a real table with the same purpose. As it happens, Jimmy failed to materialise for the 7am rehearsal and there was a real fear the producer was going to pull the plug on it before the 10am air time (even though a taxi had been sent to Jimmy's place to ensure he was collected).

At 7.30am, however, the taxi driver reported that he'd knocked on Jimmy's door and his wife had told him to wait as he was taking a shower. Ten minutes later she told him that he was having a bowl of flakes. And on the third attempt he was informed that Jimmy was on the loo. So the TV director eventually rang and diplomatically tried to figure out what was actually going on. She eventually admitted that he wasn't there because he'd gone out for a drink… last Monday! All hell broke loose at the studio, but they decided to run with the piece anyway, and got the presenter Andy Crane (who was a bit on the slim side) to stand in for Jimmy wearing a seriously large snooker outfit…

Another funny incident was in 1992 when a Channel 4 topical media news program called *6 thirty* picked up the idea of filming Jimmy White playing Richard Branson at snooker, plugging the storming success of 'Jimmy's new game'.

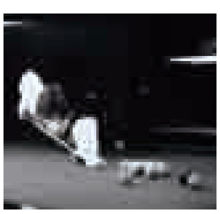
To avoid any more cock-ups, I went and picked up Jimmy myself to ensure he actually arrived. On the way there Jimmy asked to pull over at his favourite pub in Wimbledon. It turns out they know him really well and give him free pints! Anyhow, a swift two or four later and half a dozen autographs and it was back to the car. Where he promptly fell asleep… Memo to self: don't drink loads mid-afternoon before a big Press event.

I arrived at Branson's, woke Jimmy up, and we go into this big gaff to be greeted by the man himself who promptly poured us a couple of very large gin and tonics. Turns out he was in a seriously good mood having just signed up the Rolling Stones earlier that day.

Which wasn't so good when it came to filming around his antique snooker table… The problem was that we were there to film a casual mock chat between Branson and Jimmy, whilst they pulled off a few snooker trick shots. However, Jimmy just couldn't make a single trick work, which was not helped by Branson teasing him with: "I thought you were the world number 2 – how much are we paying you?" Jimmy pointed out that the table must be one of Branson's famous practical jokes with the tightest pockets ever and that it's just impossible. Branson then blurts out: "well, what do you expect, it's a Virgin table". At which point the TV crew fell over with laughter and things had to be abandoned for a while.

When all the dust settled, Jimmy made it up to Virgin Games by offering 4 whole days of PR time which Virgin used to the max and the rest is history, along with 3 sequels. Virgin even worded the advert for the 1999 Dreamcast version after the above antics!

Ahhh, the good old days…

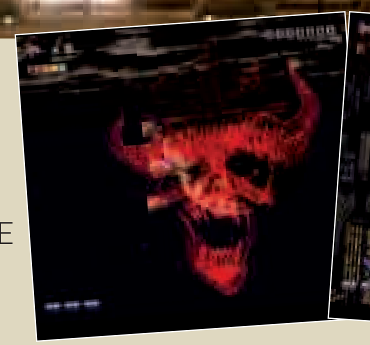


» Me missing the pink, which for black and white viewers is behind the brown

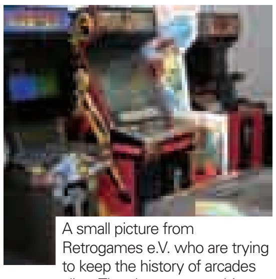




SPIEL ÜBER ALLES



"OUR INTREPID INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY, JOHN SZCZEPANIAK, IS ONCE AGAIN DOCUMENTING THE WORLD'S GAMING HISTORIES. THIS MONTH HE HITS THE DEUTSCHE AUTOBAHNEN BUT NEARLY DOESN'T WRITE AN ARTICLE DUE TO WÜRSTE, GUTEM BIER UND HÜBSCHEN FRAUEN"



A small picture from Retrogames e.V. who are trying to keep the history of arcades alive. They have more cabinets than space to display them, but they're all free to play!

Below: VideoGames, one of Germany's best and well-known games mags, launched in 1991. One of the few European publications to advertise the NeoGeo CD, it gave coverage to a wide selection of import games and even Anime/Manga! And thanks to staff member Ted Hara (who later translated *Final Fantasy* games into German), it always had exclusive interviews with Sakaguchi from Squaresoft and other cool Japan-based features



Ich grüße meine Leserschaft! (Greetings readers!)

Some may question covering Germany, being so close to the UK and of course, other PAL territory. The misconception is that they have things the same as us, except with more censorship. This is far from the truth, as our mainland brethren have helped shape the face of gaming over the years.

One of the commonly known things about German videogames is the intense censorship, strict age ratings and general dislike of violent things. Which may seem odd for a country that liberally places the age of consent at 14 and drinking at 16 (a case of make love not war?). Generally (though there have been exceptions) blood must be green and enemies robots or zombies. In *Command & Conquer* all the soldiers were androids while blood was omitted (in contrast, *Starcraft* retained blood). Going further back, who can forget *The Great Escape* on 8-bit having its plot totally altered before release?

Even when games do have stronger content, it's always with a strictly enforced high age rating. Some games are "indexed" and not allowed to be advertised in stores. You find sales charts where the number one spot simply has "USK-18 game" listed, meaning you must specifically request it at the counter and show an ID card. Recently, German politicians have even been wanting to completely forbid "Ego-Shooters" (see boxout). These decisions have sadly had great ramifications for Europe, often games have to be tailored to suit German tastes before localisation is finished. The most recent example was Team Ninja's *Ninja Gaiden*. It was heavily cut in Germany and featured none of the gory decapitations that featured in other versions.

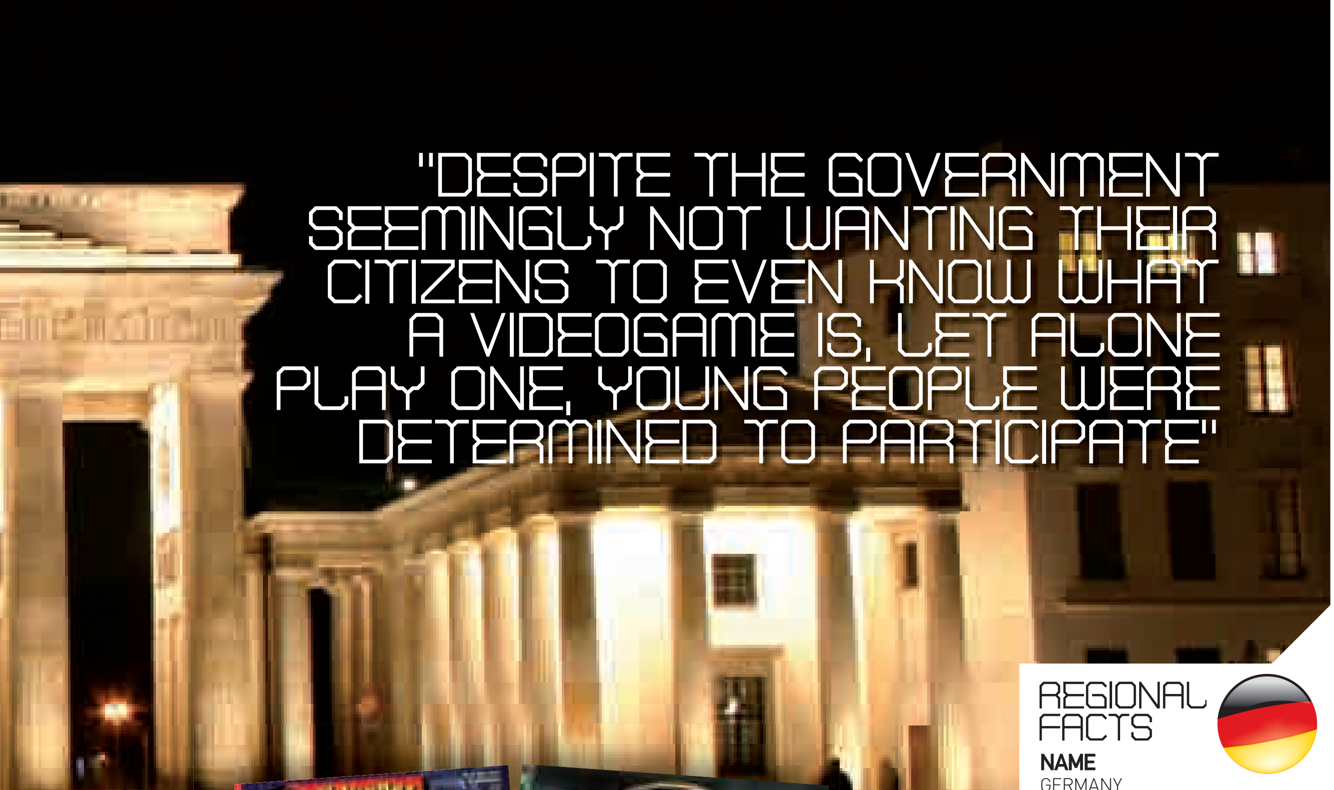
Despite such regulation, the media still has the occasional field day (much like England!) regarding supposed games-related murders. One example is the infamous "Squall story". An obsessive *Final Fantasy* fan who idolised Squall, one day bought a samurai sword and while dressed as his hero went on a killing spree. Allegedly he killed even his own parents before committing suicide.

There has always been a massive difference in the perception of computer and console games. Computer titles tend to be stigmatised due to the dislike for violent content; something that no doubt displeases Germany's many professional Ego-Shooter teams. Console games meanwhile are still occasionally regarded as children's toys. In the early years though, consoles were popular with RPG fans due to titles like *Secret of Mana*. Recently the preference of both gaming camps has been for more realistic graphics. Thankfully we found a fair amount of retro fans with which to talk. The consensus from several local players is that most people regard gaming, and the watching of Anime, as an immature pastime despite the massive proliferation of both.

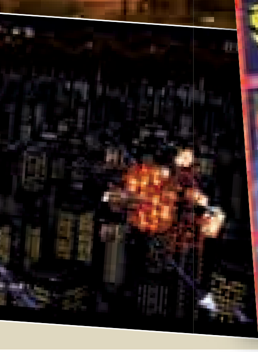
DOA ARCADES, IMPORT IMPOSITION

One of the most fascinating (and saddest) discoveries is the death of German arcades before they even reached their prime. Retro Gamer was originally introduced to this anomaly back in issue #18, when a resourceful reader explained the problem and a small archival group. As was explained, while local youth enjoyed the birth of early eighties arcades, the whole scene died nearly overnight in 1985 when the government passed a new law for the "Protection of Minors in Public". Arcade games mainly ended up in certain "play houses" where one had to be 18 or over to enter. Cabinets eventually disappeared around the early nineties. This law must have had a profound affect on the psychological development of playing tastes. Arcade games are seldom popular on home systems, while console gaming never gained as much popularity as in other countries. Fight the oppression and support http://retrogames.info, who save old arcade cabs and have a special museum in Karlsruhe, which is free to enter and games cost nothing to play!

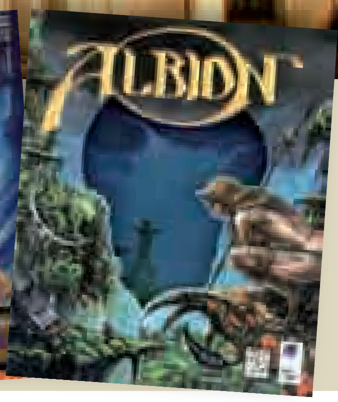
Tales of woe do not end there though! While importing videogames was possible during the 16-bit console era (costing sometimes three times as much as domestic games), around the dawn of the Saturn/PSX era the government again meddled in people's freedom by passing a shocking law that made it illegal to sell imported videogames. Before this, stores stocked games that would never make it to Europe, like *Final*



"DESPITE THE GOVERNMENT SEEMINGLY NOT WANTING THEIR CITIZENS TO EVEN KNOW WHAT A VIDEOGAME IS, LET ALONE PLAY ONE, YOUNG PEOPLE WERE DETERMINED TO PARTICIPATE"







Far left: Images from the Raumschiffspiele sections of *Targa/ Rendering Ranger* on the SFC
Middle: A cover from the popular magazine "Aktueller Software Markt" which dates back over a decade
Right: The cover of *Albion*, another game by German developers Blue Byte

REGIONAL FACTS

NAME
GERMANY

LAST EST. POPULATION
82.5 MILLION

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE(S)
GERMAN (DEUTSCH)

TIME ZONES
GMT+1

TV TYPE
PAL/50HZ

VOLTAGE
220V

CURRENCY
EURO

Fantasy 3, *Chrono Trigger* and many Japanese games (essential for Saturn owners). But when import games could no longer be found in stores, there were two options. Visiting Austria (or other neighbouring countries) and buying them there, or using mail order and having them delivered. Thankfully magazines like 'VideoGames' ran import related ads. As staunch supporters of region-free gaming, Retro Gamer salutes those who struggled against these restrictions.

HOMEGROWN HEROES

Despite the German government seemingly not wanting any of their citizens to even know what a videogame was, let alone play one, their young people were determined to be heard and participate in the videogame revolution as it engulfed Europe.

Several members of the Retro Gamer team spoke to local legend Manfred Trenz, who is referred to as "The Master" in Europe because of his renowned C64 programming skill (see RG #08). He immediately recalled the passing of the infamous arcade law when we mentioned it: "I can remember that law, which prevented me from playing arcade games. At the time I was 16. But I found another way: Almost every pub had at least one arcade standing around and nobody really cared about some youngsters (like me) playing them".

The work he's most renowned for is of course *Turrican* (check out The Making of on page 70). He was also the sole creator of the now über-rare Japan-only *Rendering Ranger* (formerly Targa) on the Super Famicom, an exceedingly excellent and boss filled title reminiscent of *Turrican*. He reveals an interesting fact about this magnificent opus: originally it had hand-drawn sprites, but with *Donkey Kong Country* coming out there was a perceived demand for CG sprites and so the originals were sadly scrapped.

Then there's *The Great Giana Sisters* on C64, which had further German influence from celebrated veteran composer Chris Hülsbeck doing the music. Local gamers hold him in high esteem, as was shown at the 2003 "Games Convention" (a sort of German E3). He and Nobuo Uematsu were signing autographs, and fans told us that while Uematsu was easily reached, you could barely see Hülsbeck due to people going crazy over meeting him. He has created over 70 game soundtracks, and is still actively involved in SID communities and organising games concerts. There are of course other native developers too, like Blue Byte (Die Siedler) and Factor 5 (originally founded in 1985 as Factor 3, Katakis).

Before we end, some might be asking about the differences between East and West prior to reunification. Information was difficult to get, but East Germans were definitely playing games, mainly on older Atari and C64 type computers (possibly clones). Newer technology was restricted by the government (and cost); many say that the "real thing" only started in 1990 with the reunion. Expect more info as we uncover it.

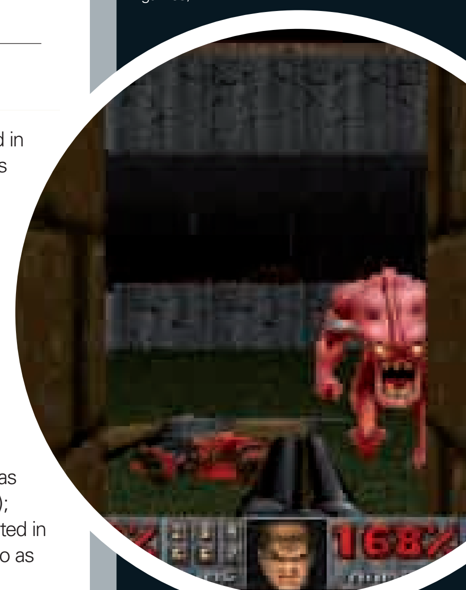
Auf Wiedersehen, until the next month's Global Gaming!



An image from Targa before it became *Rendering Ranger*, and also a comparison between the hand drawn and CG protagonist sprites

"LINGUISTIC SUBTLETIES"

It's a testament to the multicultural nature of our world, that elements of foreign languages are adopted as countries exchange cultural material like videogames. Not only Japan and Russia adapt English words for videogames. Germany does too, combining Deutsch and English to form new words referred to as DENGLISH. Role-playing expert Rya explains more, "In the RPG scene, almost only English words are used. HP, MP, Attack, Defence, Dungeon… translating this to German feels very weird. Which reminds me, German translations suck so much that most people here are using the English translation even if a German one is available. The younger ones still play on German because they don't know English so well yet. Some even play on Japanese although they don't understand a word, because it's more like the 'original'." Meanwhile FPS games are referred to as "Ego-Shooters", while depending on who you speak to, some don't know the term 'shmup' and use 'Raumschiffspiele' (spaceship games).



Above: *Doom*. It's a 'First-person shooter' in the UK and an 'Ego-Shooter' in Germany, but which is correct? Who cares? It's still a great game

MANFRED TRENZ, RYA REISENDER, NORBERT WAGNER, INSERT CREDIT, WWW.KULTPOWER.DE AND HTTP://RETROGAMES.INFO FOR INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE WITH THIS ARTICLE. BE SURE TO CONTACT RETRO GAMER IF YOU WANT YOUR COUNTRY COVERED!

BACK TO THE EIGHTIES



THE LATEST NEWS FROM FEBRUARY 1986

February 1986 was a month of contrasts. It was all sweetness and light for Mr Sugar and Amstrad, whilst Commodore's profits (or lack of them) were becoming a concern. Over in Speccyland, all was calm. With the 128K Spectrum released, Sir Clive must've been quietly optimistic about the future. Hmm, the lull before the storm...



» The Chris Waddle school of penalty taking is open for business once again…

The eagerly awaited release of the Sinclair Spectrum 128K finally arrived at the end of the month. Priced at £179.99, it included a software package but didn't include the numeric keypad which came as standard when it was released in Spain back in September 1985.

With the new machine and its newfound extra grunt, software houses were keen to get new or enhanced 128K versions of their games out as quickly as possible. Ocean had improved versions of *Daley Thompson's Supertest* and, like the persistent takeover rumours constantly following Sinclair, *The Never Ending Story*. Both of these titles came bundled with the machine.

Gargoyle Games followed suit with its own 128K release *Sweevo's Whirled*. The original 48K release of *Sweevo's World* had only just hit the shops itself. Hewson weighed in with the *Technician Ted Megamix*. All in all a promising start to Sinclair's attempt to reaffirm itself as the undisputed king of UK computing.

This was partially confirmed when two independent surveys into the home computing market and machine market share revealed the Spectrum was a clear market leader in 1985 with 35 per cent.

Although things were looking to be rosier than in the previous few months, the big news for Sinclair wasn't very far away and it certainly wasn't going to be very pleasant…

The other 8-bit big hitters, Amstrad and Commodore released further financial updates for the year and they couldn't have been more different.

Commodore was still smarting after the closure of its production facility at Corby and the figures reflected that. For the three months running up to Christmas, Commodore posted a loss of nearly £38 million with Corby accounting for approximately £15 million of that loss.

Alan Sugar, on the other hand, was sitting pretty when Amstrad announced pre-tax profits for the second half of the year to be £27.5 million. This was an astonishing increase in profits considering the previous six months profit was just a third of that.

A considerable chunk of this was down to the excellent sales of the PCW8256, which contributed just over 20 per cent to Mr Sugar's already ample coffers. With sales of the PCW and CPC machines doing very well on the continent, particularly in France and Germany, overseas sales accounted for almost half of Amstrad's entire turnover.

With the outstanding success of the charity games compilation *Soft Aid* in 1985, it was announced that two further charitable gaming assemblages would be making appearances on a range of 8-bit machines in the coming month.

The first, entitled *Off The Hook*, was aimed at raising money to help in the fight of drug abuse and contribute to rehabilitation. Several high profile companies pledged games to the cause such as Elite, Melbourne House and US Gold, although the quality of the games they offered was somewhat less than inspiring.

With games such as *The Fall Guy*, *Kong Strikes Back* and *Pitfall 2* on the Spectrum and Commodore 64 versions, it was never going to be a groundbreaking collection of gaming excellence. Still, ten games for £6.99 and a good chunk of that going to charity certainly wasn't a bad thing.



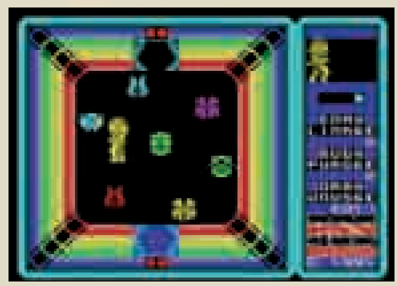
» The current godfather of computing is planning to make someone an offer they can't refuse very soon

The second compilation planning to do a lot of work for "charidee" was *War On Want*. Profits from the sale of this compilation would help Third World countries become more self sufficient, whilst improving their education and health care systems.

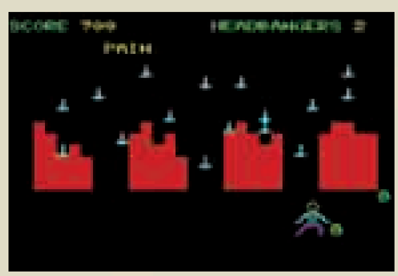
With an April release date targeted and several software houses pencilled in for donating freebie games, the 14 strong games compilation sounded like it was going to be superb. Once again, the quality of the offerings was somewhat lacklustre with a selection of classic (ie old) games.

Sinclair Research blew the dust off and donated *Horace And The Spiders*, PSS kindly supplied *Xavior*, while Llamasoft pitched in with *Headbangers Heaven*. All the games were reasonably playable but hardly material that would rouse your joystick. Still, the generosity and good intentions of the companies involved were admirable and applauded in both cases.

Software giant Ultimate revealed the title of their next outing for Sir Arthur Pendragon



» Does Mr Spaceman look familiar? Well, *Xavior* was the prequel to The Covenant



» Yet another whacked out game from those trippy people from Llamasoft. Oh man, I'm evolving…

1986

FEBRUARY NEWS



» It's amazing what you could make with Meccano and duct tape back then

7 February saw Jean Claude (Baby Doc) Duvalier ousted as President of Haiti after 15 years in charge. He left the country after three months of public protests regarding the government's repressive political and economic disposition. He left Haiti to settle in France.

On the 11th of the month, author of the science fiction novel *Dune* and its five sequels, Frank Herbert, died of pancreatic cancer at the age of 65.

The first part of the Russian Mir space station was launched into space on 20 February. The core module, the main part of the multi-modular orbital space station, would also serve as the living quarters for the cosmonauts.

28 February saw the assassination of Swedish Prime Minister, Olof Palme. He was shot dead in front of his wife after a trip to the cinema. Christer Pettersson was later found guilty of the murder but was later acquitted although Palme's wife, Lisbeth, insists that Pettersson was the man she saw kill her husband. She was shot in the back during the attack. Pettersson died in September 2004 with reports shortly before his death stating that he allegedly admitted to the murder.



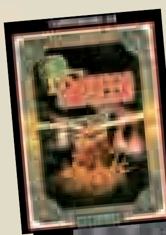
Although not Earth shattering in newsworthiness it certainly caused TV viewers to rub their eyes vigorously in disbelief. As TV cameos go, Boy George appearing in *The A-Team* would not only seem one of the most unlikely unions in entertainment but one of the most ill-advised/unintentionally comedic/downright asinine (delete as applicable).

Well, on 11 February 1986 that is exactly what happened…

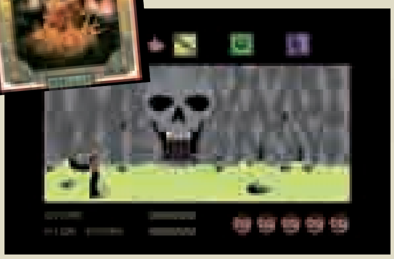
on the Commodore 64 in the form of *Dragon Skulle*. After the less than enthusiastic response to their previous games pairing of *Imhotep* and *Outlaws*, Ultimate found itself in the unusual position of having to prove that the old magic was still there. *Dragon Skulle* was due for release some time in March.

In the hallowed Amstrad tome, Amtix, the Accolades were presented to a varied bunch of games although just four titles received the top award: *Barry McGuigan's World Championship Boxing* (Activision), *Nightshade* (Ultimate), *Sweevo's World* (Gargoyle Games) and the long awaited CPC conversion of *Elite* (Firebird).

Zzap! 64 also only had four supreme offerings and unusually there were two Gold Medal winners. The first was for *Bounder* (Gremlin Graphics) and the second game to proudly bear the gold was the stunning *The Eidolon* (Activision/Lucasfilm).



The other two games worthy of attaining Sizzledom were *Fight Night* (US Gold) and *Revs* (Firebird).



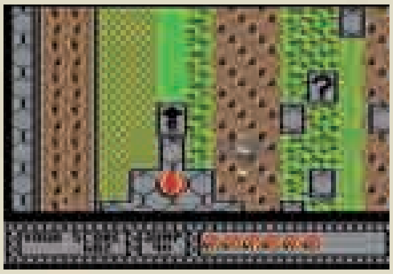
» Ultimate's final instalment in the Sir Arthur Pendragon series of games, but would it be any good?

At the other end of the scale a monumental offering from little known software house Reelax managed a quite awful nine per cent for its game, *One Bite Too Deep*. The bulk of that score was awarded for the quality of glue used on the cassette label.

The Spectrum had a bumper crop of games smashed by Crash this month. The glorious half dozen were *Mikie* (Imagine), *Zoids* (Martech), *Yie Ar Kung Fu* (Imagine), *Sweevo's World* (Gargoyle Games), *Gunfright* (Ultimate) and *Mindshadow* (Activision).



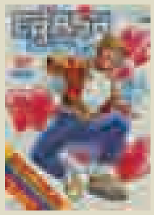
» A red dragon blocks your path. A leek and Charlotte Church are your only hope



» Housemaid's knee? Nope, tennis balls. Keep them bouncing and you'll be fine

THIS MONTH IN...

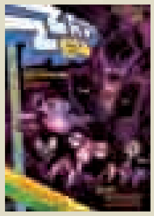
Crash Flash



February's issue had a distinct Valentine feel with hearts adorning the cover. Fortunately Oliver Frey hadn't gone all mushy but had combined Imagine's Crash Smash game of the month, *Mikie*, which involved collecting hearts, with the month's lurve theme.



Zzap! Back



Issue 10 was a classic cover celebrating Activision's Gold Medal winning game, *The Eidolon* which featured an array of weird and wonderful aliens, bugs and monsters. Inside there were interviews with two of the all-time greats – Martin Galway and Tony Crowther.



Amtix! Antics

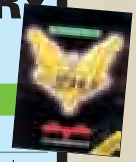


After last months beat-'em-up cover, Amtix! issue four featured another: Gremlin Graphics' *Way Of The Tiger*, which was previewed inside. With a splash of blood, a samurai sword and a rabid tiger, it made for a distinctive cover.



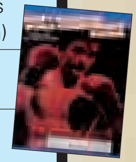
CHARTS

FEBRUARY 1986



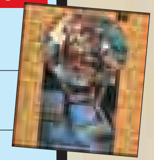
AMSTRAD

1 Elite (Firebird)
2 Fromula One Simulator (Mastertronic)
3 Yie Ar Kung Fu (Imagine)
4 Hypersports (Imagine)
5 Sky Fox (Ariolasoft)



SPECTRUM

1 Barry McGuigan's Boxing (Activision)
2 Spellbound (Mastertronic)
3 Winter Games (US Gold)
4 Yie Ar Kung Fu (Imagine)
5 West Bank (Gremlin Graphics)

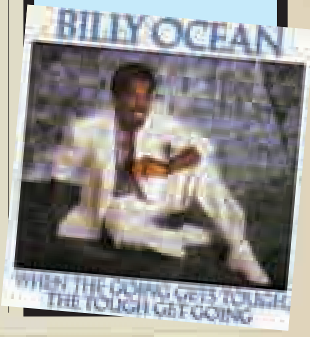


COMMODORE 64

1 Kung Fu Master (US Gold)
2 The Eidolon (Activision)
3 Rock 'N' Wrestle (Melbourne House)
4 Kane (Mastertronic)
5 Bounder (Gremlin Graphics)

MUSIC SINGLES CHART FEB '86

1 West End Girls (Billy Ocean)
2 Borderline (Madonna)
3 The Sun Always Shines On TV (A-HA)
4 Only Love (Nana Mouskouri)
5 System Addict (Five Star)



THE RETRO FORUM

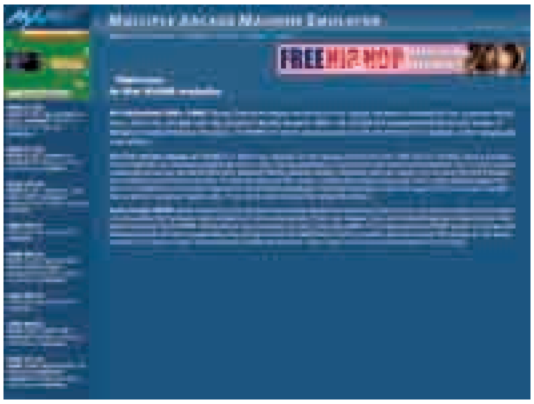
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DODGY DABBLING

Dear *Retro Gamer,*

Issue 19 was a great read and is a great improvement over the old magazine. I was worried that the new Retro Gamer would lean more towards legally dubious emulator stuff rather than actual collecting, so I'm pleased you haven't gone in that direction. I especially like the addition of price values for collectors, as I find it very handy and am looking forward to more features like this in future issues of the mag.

Eustacia Frost via email

Glad you're enjoying the new look, Eustacia. We will be dealing with emulation features in later issues of the mag (check out this month's excellent Mac piece on page 96), but we are aware that these pieces aren't for everyone.

FUZZY WUZZY BEAR

Dear RG,

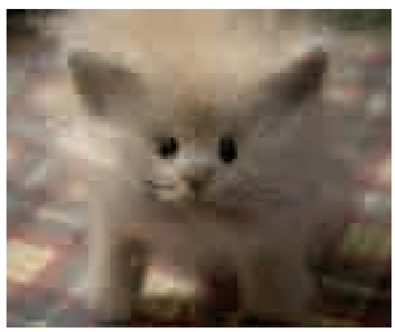
At the beginning of December, whilst I was up in my loft looking for my Christmas decorations, I came across my collection of Crash Magazines and decided to dust them off and read them through again. I paid particular attention to the Christmas Specials and you know what? They still read as good today as they did back in the 1980's. Everything just seemed to fit and with the involvement of the readers, it felt like the magazine was being written just for me. Just casually flicking through a random issue brings back all the good memories associated with that time in my life when I started my love affair with gaming which continues to this day.

To cut a long story short, when I got hold of Issue 19, those same 'magazine' feelings returned and I was instantly transported back in time to when a new issue of a games magazine could still get me excited. It's good to see that Retro Gamer has returned to the shelves and I hope that it continues to encourage reader participation, as I believe this is a huge factor in what makes a magazine fun to read. I look forward to the next issue and the (hopefully) included, free of charge, 'warm and fuzzy feelings'.

Richard Matthews via email

Damn, if we knew you were all getting 'warm and fuzzy feelings' we would have charged you for them…

Joking aside, we're glad to see that you and many others are loving Retro Gamer's return and we're going to do everything we can to ensure that you continue looking forward to each and every issue.



DISC-USSION TIME

Dear *Retro Gamer,*

Welcome back, you've been greatly missed. I really like the new format but I do think that there's something wrong with it. Where has the coverdisc disappeared? I know you removed it to cut the price, but to be honest, part of the reason I bought the mag in the first place was to re-live my misspent youth, playing the games of yesteryear. So please, please, please bring it back. I don't mind paying that little extra, and I am sure that other people agree. Please get people to write in to voice their opinion and see what everyone really wants.

Kindest regards, Andy Baynes
Ashford, Kent

Dear *Retro Gamer,*

First of all welcome back! I've missed your magazine the last few months and I hope that you're now here to stay for good.

My only problem though is the cover price – £4.99 for a magazine with no disc content? That's pretty steep, you have to admit. I realise that finding stuff for discs every month can be hard work, so maybe that's the reason for the delay.

I don't mind if you don't include a cover disc every issue, but I do think that the price should be more reasonable to reflect the disc's absence. I've always been a huge fan of the magazine and have been collecting it since issue 2. My only regret is that I never got hold of the first, now if you could only reprint it…

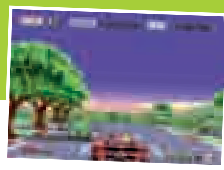
Mark Stewart via email

Dear *Retro Gamer,*

Why on earth have you dropped the coverdisc? It's 90% of the reason to buy the mag in my opinion. I've been with you from the start, but without the coverdisc fix I just don't think that the magazine is worth it. Please listen, as I'm not the only person who feels this way.

Charles McNeill via email









Thanks for the letters guys, but Retro Gamer *won't be returning to its monthly disc format. While we'll certainly consider disc-based content in later issues, we want to ensure that they mean something to readers and not basically fill them up with the sort of stuff that you can download from the Internet.*

As for the cover price, it's a pound cheaper than the old magazine and has more pages than the later issues, what more do you want? Blood?

AMIGA POWER

Dear *Retro Gamer*,

Just wanted to comment first on what a brilliant magazine you have got going here, it's about time!

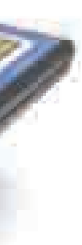
Anyway, my main query at the moment is whether or not you have covered the Amiga in your magazine yet in any way, shape or form. It doesn't matter if it's a small article or if you have dedicated an entire magazine to it, I'm just very interested in ordering the relevant back issue.

Thank you very much, and good luck with the magazine.

Michael via email



Sorry Michael, but issue 9 that featured a Look Back at the various Amiga systems has long sold out. However, we are featuring an in-depth look at the Amiga 1200 in issue 22. Your best bet is to take out a subscription – that way you'll never miss an issue.



RETROSEXUAL

It's confession time and I'm coming out of the closet. I am a retrosexual. It's in no small part thanks to this magazine, in fact, it all started when I saw issue one on the shelves many, many months ago. So you can imagine how happy I am to see Retro Gamer back and looking better than ever.

While I may have watched my brother playing his Commodore 64 in amazement as a little boy and while my friend did have a ZX

FROM THE FORUM

EVERY MONTH, RETRO GAMER WILL BE ASKING A QUESTION ON THE FORUM AND PRINTING THE BEST REPLIES. THIS MONTH, WE WANTED TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE FAVOURITE GAMING MOMENTS WERE. YOU CERTAINLY WEREN'T SHY...

ID: Thraka

I have to say one of my favourite moments was on my C64 running around in Agent USA for a LONG time trying to get my diamond count up, and accidentally running into the FuzzBomb. I just froze. I didn't know what to do! I never could get to him again.

Another of my favourite moments was playing Price of Persia on the PC. On level 4 there is a point where a mirror is blocking your way out of the level. I just sort of looked at it. I mean: it wasn't there before!! So I tried to walk through it, duck through it, nothing. I decided to take a running start and jump through the mirror and a shadow me jumped out the other end! That was so surprising…

ID: Ash

The bit in Streets of Rage where time stopped for a second so that the police could pull up and bomb the hell out of all the thugs. I've wanted that ability in the real world ever since.

ID: EnglishRob:

I'd have to say Playing OutRun for the first time in my local arcades. I must have been about eight or nine at the time. The graphics were gorgeous, the soundtrack one of the best I've heard, and the idea of driving a Ferrari with a cute blonde sitting next to you... no videogame moment beats that memory for me.

ID: Necronom

Playing Defender of the Crown for the first time.

It was at a computer club I used to go to, and someone was demonstrating the new machine. It was the first time I got my hands on an Amiga. It had a proper operating system; used a mouse; 3.5 inch disks; looked like a 'real' computer (it was an A1000); had 4096 colours; tons of RAM and was fast. We knew it was something special since we had previously seen the Boing! demo.

When he let us play DotC, everyone there was amazed by the graphics and sound and it's one of those special moments that will probably never happen again. These days we don't get those leaps in technology or in the way computers work.

ID: Sabreman

My favourite videogame moment is without a doubt fighting and defeating Dark Falz in Phantasy Star Online 'Challenge Mode'. Weeks of working hard as a close team making our way through each stage, learning from our mistakes, shaving vital seconds off our overall time. After a two-hour run through the final level we warped in to fight Falz, and those minutes were the most tense, exciting, exhilarating few minutes of videogaming I've ever experienced.

When we laid the final blow my heart was pounding through my chest and the sense of achievement was glorious... made all the better for the fact that it took four of us playing as well as we could together to do it.

ID: Mort

My Fav moment was visiting the Paylar craft in Mercenary on the 64 and walking out of the wrong door and freefalling back to earth with spinning horizon and surviving the landing!

ID: Mayhem

I have a few... but one of most significant and special to me is finally beating C64 Impossible Mission, and proving the title wrong. Many people screw up on the puzzle part, but that was always the easy bit for myself; it was figuring out the rooms properly that took the time. But with hands sweating and careful movement to the door for the underground bunker, the final endgame sequence was revealed. Complete with more speech. A good ending to one of the greatest games ever.

Today I can bust the game in under an hour on any configuration setting, but back then; it seemed a colossal task to do.

ID: fgasking

There's so many, but the first time I ever saw Sonic the Hedgehog running at our local Indoor Market. There was a stall, which charged £1 for an hours play of all the latest games and consoles. I was totally blown away, and blew a lot of pocket money on it.

Another was playing Paperboy for the first time on the C64, and being able to throw papers and smash people's windows in. I spent more time damaging people's houses and windows more than playing the game. Considering my dad's trade was fixing glass, he wasn't too amused by it.

ID: helloall

Watching my mate smash his copy of Kick Off 2 against the wall after I beat him... Then watched him open the Amiga the following week to get the inside of the disk to run again so he could try and get revenge, bliss.

ID: Merman

A trio of SNES moments: completing Super Mario World for the first time, getting 100 on all the levels of Yoshi's Island and getting to the end of Super Metroid. I bought mine second-hand from a student who was upgrading to a PS1, and I'm glad I did.

ID: Sandinista

Beating the Galaxian Arcade World record, held by Perry Rogers for 20-odd years, in August 2004, would have to be my favourite moment

THE RETRO FORUM



Spectrum (which was already conceived as retro back in the early 90's), I mainly grew up playing NES, Mega Drive and SNES games. They are undoubtedly my fondest retro gaming memories, along with the original PlayStation, which many will no doubt say is too modern to be classed as retro (but let's not forget that many classic gaming moments and titles did come from that time).

Tomb Raider, Resident Evil and *Metal Gear Solid* are just a few of the great games that have gone on to spawn successful franchises, plus of course, it's easy to forget that the console itself is now over ten years old.

Anyway, my rekindled interest in retro gaming has caused me to head to the shops like a heat seeking missile and buy compilations such as *Sonic Mega Collection Plus* and *Capcom Classics Collection*. I even imported *Taito Memories* from Japan mere days after its release. It's amazing how many of these games still feel fresh to play today.

So while Xbox 360 is already among us, and the PlayStation3 is just around the corner, graphic and sound quality will no doubt take us to the next level. However, it's still good to have a go at the good old games.

Reinard Krohn, Hampshire

It's good to hear that you've finally come out of the closet and nice to see that you also view the PlayStation as an old machine. While it's certainly not as retro as the Spectrum or Amiga, many readers do class it as such. Retro Gamer will never be stuffed to the gills with content from the newer Retro machines, but we certainly won't be ignoring them.



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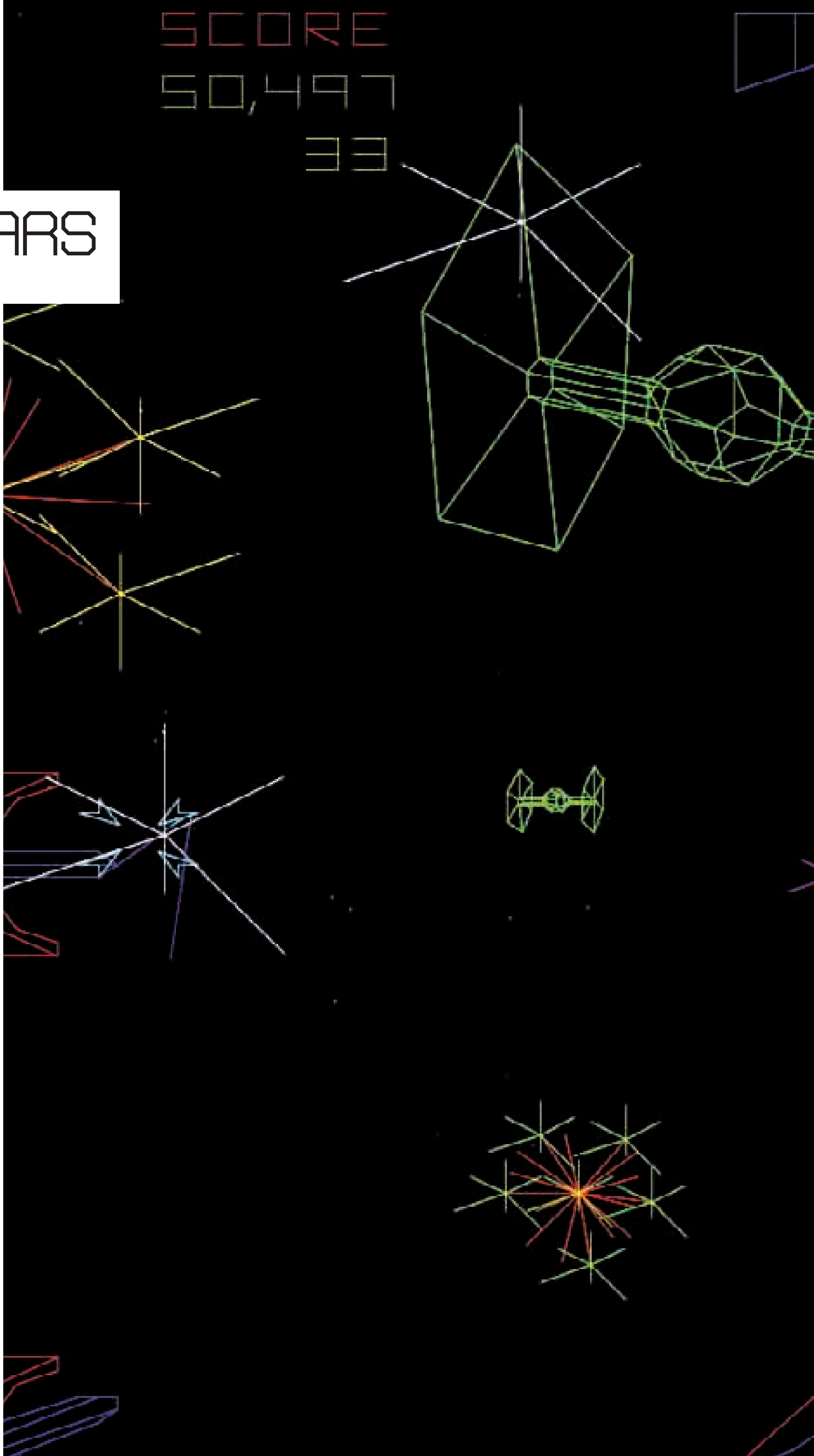
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IMAGINE PUBLISHING

eMag



STAR WARS

"YOU'RE ALL CLEAR KID"



- **PUBLISHER** ATARI
- **RELEASED:** 1983
- **GENRE:** SHOOT-'EM-UP
- **FEATURED HARDWARE:** ARCADE
- **EXPECT TO PAY:** £1000+



HISTORY

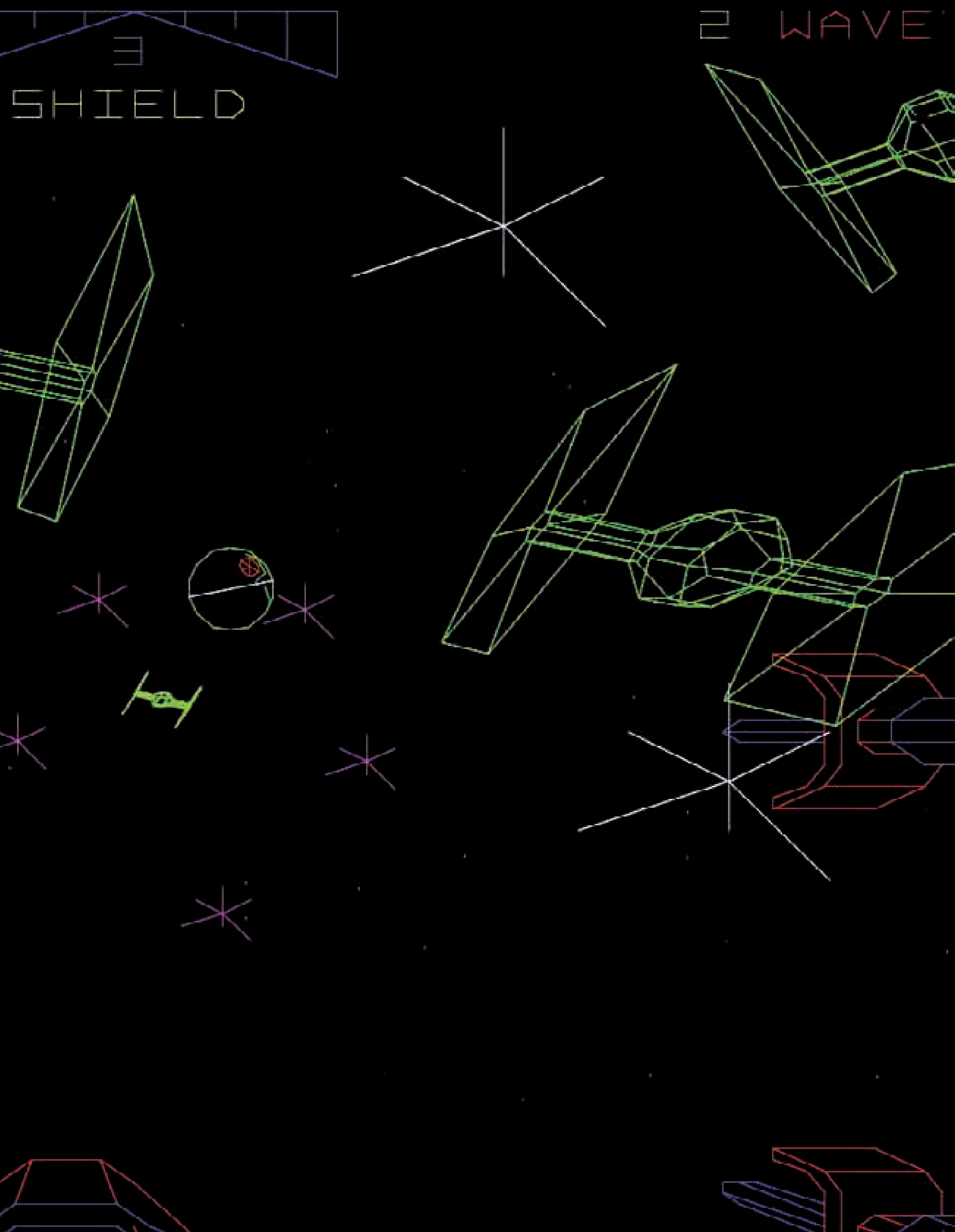
Like many adult males my age I'm a bit of a self-confessed *Star Wars* fan. It's not that I think they're exceptionally well made films – the masterful *Empire Strikes Back* excluded – it's just that they managed to connect with me in a way no other movie has since managed.

Playtime at school would be spent arguing over who got to play Han Solo (it was never me) walks home turned into inevitable re-inactions of key sequences from the trilogy, while my back garden was littered with toys.

Thank God then for the Atari release of *Star Wars* in 1983, as I was given a further output for all my Jedi-fuelled fantasies. Admittedly, this wasn't the first *Star Wars* videogame (that honour goes to the Atari 2600's plodding *The Empire Strikes Back*) but it was the first game to fully capture the joy of the *Star Wars* films, and I lapped it up.

Everything about it was perfect. The sit-down cabinet felt (with a lot of imagination) like you were strapped into your very own X-Wing fighter, the controls were incredibly precise (although you may struggle a little with them nowadays) and the aesthetics were amazing. Tie Fighters roared across the screen, fireballs hurtled towards you at frightening speeds and the dreaded Death Star loomed ever closer. Add in the wide variety of sound effects straight from the film and some of the best 'digitised speech' around and the end result was a truly magical experience that ate up your credits at a truly alarming rate.

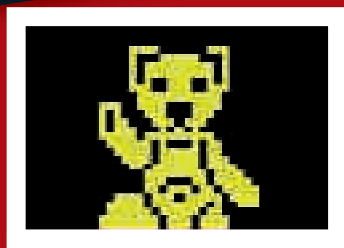
What made *Star Wars* so great was the sheer amount of action that was going on. While the aerial dogfights with opposing Tie Fighters were fun, it was the exhilarating race down the Death Star's trench that proved to be the game's real trump card. After reliving the movie so many times in the school playground, the ability to finally participate in the real thing (or as close to it as possible) was a revelation. Thank goodness they had a stand-up cabinet at the Retro Ball…

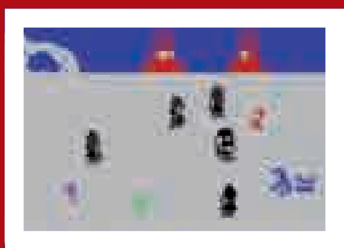

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2 WAVE

COMPANY PROFILE

IMAGINE

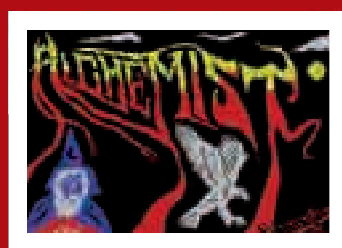


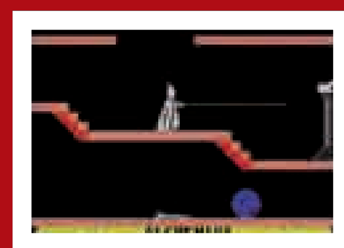




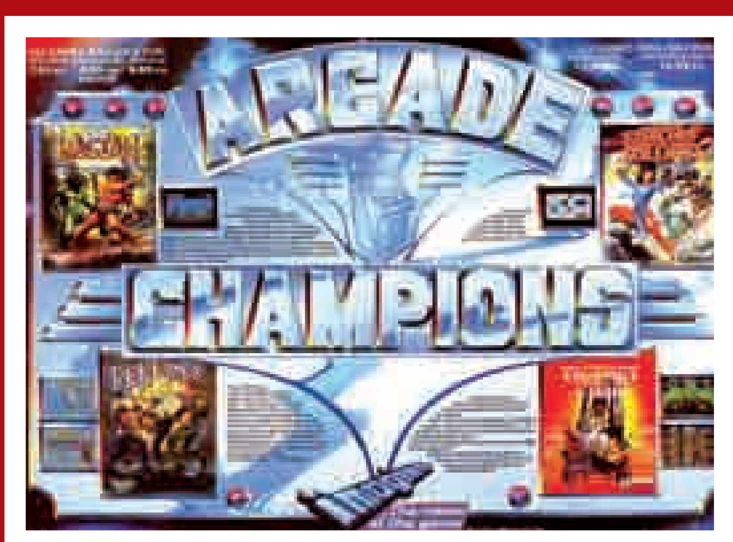






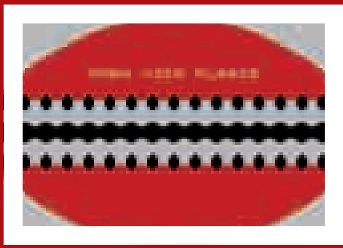


A FAIRY TALE BEGIN
ALL ENDED IN TEAR
COULD HAVE IMAGI









NNING THAT RS. WHO NED IT?



Among the whiz-kid software houses from the halcyon days of 8-bit home computing was Imagine; it lived fast and died young, spectacularly going bust right in front of a BBC TV film crew. Humble beginnings, pioneering computer games, debonair lifestyles and a dramatic climax, Imagine Software (no relation we hasten to add) did it all inside of 18 months

Mark Butler (a salesman) and Dave Lawson (a programmer) met at the increasingly successful Liverpudlian software company Bug Byte, which also nurtured the talents of Manic Miner creator Matthew Smith. Not long after beginning their tenure, a divergence from managerial policy prompted the pair to leave Bug Byte and start their own software house known as Imagine.

Lawson had already put together a game that would be used as Imagine's launch title: an addictive space-based shooter for the Spectrum 16K and Commodore Vic 20 that was entitled *Arcadia*.

With the proceeds from the outstanding success of *Arcadia* and the subsequent Spectrum titles making headway on the good Imagine name, earnings rapidly skyrocketed, prompting the new industry hot-shots to relocate into professional premises, whilst taking on staff and pouring funding into new projects. Their former boss, Bruce Everiss was brought in as a general manager, allowing Lawson and Butler the time to indulge themselves in the flamboyant, playboy lifestyles they had been building towards.

Back in the early days, many were the software developers that easily entered the market due to their technical expertise, but quickly suffered from a lack of business and marketing proficiency; not unlike the tornado of 'dot com' companies in recent years. Imagine, however, did not struggle with the task of spreading its good word, and deftly, if occasionally unscrupulously, played the media game to win.

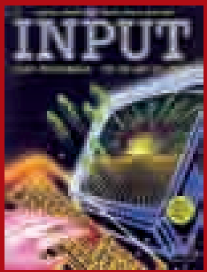
A teenage employee who had proven himself as somewhat of a programming prodigy had taken an in-house job at Imagine and was the subject of an ingenious marketing ploy to increase the public profile of his impetuous employers. His name was Eugene Evans, and 'somehow' the tabloids got hold of his remarkable success story.

The Daily Star carried the headline '£35,000 WHIZ KID'; referring to rumours that Evans was on such a salary at Imagine when only 16-years-old. It was suggested that he already owned a flashy sports car despite being too young to drive it. This entire media buzz was a ruse that was designed to improve Imagine's standing in the software developers' community and ease any concerns that distributors might have about dealing with such fledgling programmers.

And its unconventional marketing strategies didn't stop there. After the gaping void in the availability of computer games in 1982, developers were bustling and ready for the following holiday season. 1983 was set to see the most savage competition the UK games market had ever seen, and Imagine was determined to come out of it smelling of green.

MEGA GAMES, MEGA PROBLEMS

In an unprincipled attempt to stymie rival developers in the run up to Christmas '83, Imagine booked up all the cassette duplication time at Kiltdale, the largest tape duplicator for the software industry at the time.



» The Input Magazine deal went sour supposedly due to Imagine's games being too good…

IN (PUT) FLAGRANTE

Another potentially lucrative deal with publishers Marshall Cavendish also caused perturbing chest pains for the increasingly troubled company. Imagine had taken a £200,000 advance for supplying games to accompany its new computer-based partworks publication, Input.

The deal was for fortnightly multi-format cover tapes containing computer games, but Imagine was late in delivering the reportedly substandard goods. Marshall Cavendish demanded that its advance payment be returned, which left a gaping hole in Imagine's already Swiss-cheese finances. A statement by Imagine in Sinclair User stated that Marshall Cavendish had requested 'average' games, while the ones supplied were just too good, so the deal was called off!



IN THE KNOW

In brief: Retro Gamer recounts the playboy lifestyle of the ill-fated, dynamic, renowned Liverpool software house, Imagine, and its spectacular collapse right in front of a TV film crew. Formed by Mark Butler and Dave Lawson (above), Imagine appeared to have it all. As time progressed, the arrogance and extravagant lifestyles of its two co-founders cost the company dearly and it eventually closed its doors within two years of the company forming. Its story remains a valuable lesson for software companies the world over.



COMPANY PROFILE

IMAGINE

NOT SO JOLLY

In an attempt to reduce its burdens, marketing rights to Imagine's back catalogue were sold to London based publishers, Beau Jolly, which then distributed the newly acquired titles through Mastertronic's budget range and in compilations. In an interview for Crash magazine, Beau Jolly's Managing Director, Colin Ashby, admitted to not being very happy with deal.

He was also under the impression that the agreement included investment in new developments, most notably, the mega games.

Dave Lawson and Ian Hetherington had been putting together a lifeboat for themselves in the shape of a new company called Finchspeed, however, that was concentrating on completing the mega games and putting them out for the forthcoming Sinclair QL computer. These were developments insinuated to be part of Imagine's resuscitation deal with Beau Jolly, but apparently that was never the intention.



» One of the compilations Beau Jolly managed to release after buying up some failing Imagine property

Since games stayed in development right up until the eleventh hour, it would be impossible for Imagine's rivals to make the Christmas rush. This was an ingenious idea that hinged on one minor point: for the conspiracy to pay off, Imagine had to achieve unprecedented sales during, and after, Christmas 1983. This was just in time for the global software industry to begin crumbling, and Imagine was forced to hire an entire warehouse to store all its unsold cassettes.

Whether or not Imagine's ploy to ground rival house's duplication requirements was successful is difficult to say. The boom was far greater than expected, with literally hundreds of different software titles flooding the shelves, causing serious concerns that despite the massive sales figures, profit was spread so thinly that many software developers were unlikely to survive the winter.

By the time the Imagine team was established and the plush offices stocked from floor to ceiling with the highest of high-tech, it was time for the Lawson and Butler Show to begin work on the masterpiece they had envisioned from day one. They believed that the limits of the cassette-based systems had been reached, and the only way forward was in the shape of their 'mega game' concept. The launch titles, *Psyclapse* and *Bandersnatch*, would be vastly superior games to anything that had come before as they would be supported by additional hardware packaged with the game.

On average, an 8-bit computer game at the time cost around £7, while the mega games were set to retail between £30 and £40, assuming Imagine could afford to order the massive quantities from the Far East required to get the manufacturing costs down. Coupled with the extended software development times and additional manpower necessary to get the two proposed projects off the ground, the software hot shots were going to need some serious financing.

"BY THE TIME THE IMAGINE TEAM WAS ESTABLISHED AND THE PLUSH OFFICES STOCKED FROM FLOOR TO CEILING WITH THE HIGHEST OF HIGH-TECH, IT WAS TIME FOR THE LAWSON AND BUTLER SHOW TO BEGIN WORK ON THE MASTERPIECE THEY HAD ENVISIONED SINCE DAY ONE"

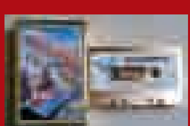
In 1983, the BBC began filming a series of programmes called 'Commercial Breaks', the new documentary was to follow the trials and tribulations faced by various companies and individuals that were trying to introduce new products to the high street. One of the BBC's concepts was to closely examine the burgeoning software industry, and Imagine was picked out as suitable candidates for the cameras to stalk.

At first, Imagine's management team were more than a little reluctant to allow the film crew into their studio, saying there were far too many sensitive projects under development to allow filming. However, once it was discovered that Ocean was also taking part in the program, Imagine's vanity won through and it agreed to take part. Dave Lawson saw it as the opportunity to record the birth of the next-generation of computer games for posterity, and indeed it would capture a unique event in the life of the British software industry, though it was not quite the one Lawson might have hoped for.

FINANCIAL ALCHEMY

Imagine's tape replication ploy certainly didn't pan out as it had hoped and the thousands upon thousands of extra copies it had ordered to deliberately congest the duplicators now had to be shelved – and money was rapidly running out.

Imagine was already beginning to topple behind the scenes, even while the BBC camera crew was being installed and opening shots of plush offices swollen with expensive hardware and management arriving for work in lavish cars were being filmed. An incident included in the BBC2 program showed a board meeting discussing the slow progress of the mega games and ways to keep the distributors on side with teaser advertisements, when an eagerly anticipated phone call is snatched up by the apprehensive



» It might be ostentatious, but the golden Alchemist tape is a collectors dream

FINEST HOUR

ALCHEMIST

An enthralling blend of action, adventure and role-playing that not only captured the... well, imagination of the players, but provided an inspiring showcase of the Spectrum's abilities for the generations that followed. A special edition ostentatious 'gold' cassette was even released, which is well worth hunting down on eBay.

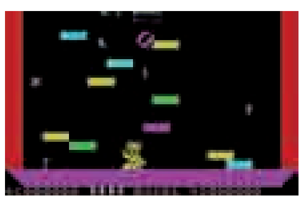
GAMES REVIEWS



ARCADIA

IMAGINE/INDESCOMP [1982]

» Written by Dave Lawson himself, *Arcadia* formed the foundations on which Imagine was built. An addictive, fast-paced *Space Invaders* clone (featuring the evil Atarian Empire) was just what the home computing scene needed. Anyone who had 'ummed' and 'ahhed' about buying a computer was reassured that they'd made the right choice. The Spectrum and the Vic 20 became serious contenders overnight, all thanks to Imagine. **85%**



AH, DIDDUMS

IMAGINE [1983]

» *Ah, Diddums* was a darkly surreal game. You, a big fluffy teddy bear, must escape from the toy box to comfort a crying baby. Should the baby be silenced, however, Mother will appear to turn off the lights, so the rest of the toys (who don't like the dark) are determined to stop teddy from escaping.
All in all this was a pretty good game, with some impressive graphics and plenty of sound. **73%**



SCHIZOIDS

IMAGINE [1983]

» Touted as a '3D breathtaking visual experience', *Schizoids* presents an initially impressive visage as the geometric vectors of space debris spin smoothly around the black hole at the centre of the screen.
The slick 3D graphics, however, were small compensation for the irritating control of the 'space-dozer' that you had to use to attempt to move garbage into the black hole. It was absolutely rubbish. **45%**



STONKERS

IMAGINE [1983]

» Put together by John 'Grandad' Gibson, *Stonkers* was a war strategy game without all the finicky scenario setups that ate up the gameplay of many other tactic based games; it got right down to the good stuff.
It appealed to veterans of the strategy genre, while the intense, non-stop action of the battles brings the game close to being an action title, making it equally accessible to fight junkies like us. **84%**

Financial Director.

He had apparently been waiting for a call regarding the £2 million investment capital needed to move the over-hyped mega games forward. The sunken look on his face as he dropped the receiver back onto the phone gave a clear indication as to the nature of the call, and as the meeting drew to a close, he stressed that no more financial commitments were to be placed without his express permission.

Up until this point, the film had concentrated on Imagine's impressive vision and doubly impressive public profile, reiterating the tabloid stories of millionaire teenager programmers and presenting action scenes of the Imagine motorbike team speeding around the Isle of Man. The sudden and unexpected change of direction depicting the company as a brave face on an extremely tenuous situation perfectly exemplified its shifting fortunes.

The meeting scene was interspersed with views of a representative from Kiltdale, the cassette duplicators Imagine had booked up for the Christmas period, anxiously pacing the lush carpet in reception, waiting to collect the £50,000 owed for the stranglehold ploy…

THE MEGA-GAME'S UP

As its difficulties compounded, Imagine suddenly caused an uproar by drastically reducing the retail price of all their games, including new releases, to £3.95; meaning that many retailers who were still holding vast unused stocks of Imagine titles were going to lose a considerable investment. The official line on the price drop was that Imagine was enjoying such success that it was able to return some of its profits to its loyal customers, when in fact it was desperate to shift as much of its inactive inventory as possible to pay off some of its escalating debts.

What Imagine wasn't prepared for was the abrupt and very public admonishment from across the industry. Other software houses immediately put out statements insisting they would not be following suit as the new Imagine price tag was unrealistic and could only lead to second-rate products, while the Guild of Software Houses told the press that the move was potentially damaging to the industry. Imagine only took notice when threats from high street retailers to cease stocking its products forced the desperate developers to about turn on its price revision only two weeks after the initial announcement; which cost an equal amount of credibility as it did quick sales.

In retrospect, this drastic marketing tactic was the death knell for Imagine.

One magazines that had carried a lot of Imagine's adverts was Crash, which, whilst remaining truthful, pulled no punches in reporting the goings on that lead to its outstanding payments, reportedly receiving more than a couple of warnings not to print anything pejorative. Naturally, those warnings were included in Crash's reports!

Neither Crash, Kiltdale nor any of the other creditors owed money had any success in contacting the upper echelons of Imagine other than a very despondent, antagonised Bruce Everiss, who was not a signatory and therefore unable to write any cheques. He was quoted in a Crash article as saying that he had looked through the company's finance records when the directors had disappeared and found there had never been a VAT return or any kind of financial control at all. His final appearance on the BBC2 documentary is of him showing the crew around an inactive, almost ransacked office where workers were watching 'American Werewolf in London' or having fire extinguisher fights to pass the time. According to his Crash interview, "…the company is up shit street."

Then, right in front of the BBC cameras, matters came to a head. Dave Lawson and Ian Hetherington (the Financial Director) abruptly left for America seeking venture capital to save Imagine (although it was more likely a trip to hunt for investors for their new enterprise, Finchspeed) when Cornhill Publications and VNU Business Press simultaneously petitioned the High Court to have Imagine wound up for non-payment of debts. These petitions went unopposed, and as the BBC camera crew and several Imagine staff returned from their lunch on 29 June 1984, they found the doors to the company locked as agents of the bailiff moved in. The BBC even had difficulty reclaiming two cameras that were inside when the company was occupied.

Mark Butler returned from racing his Imagine sponsored motorbike around the TT races covered in bandages after (rather ironically) crashing at the exact same time as his company collapsed, watching stunned and distraught as his beloved Ferrari was loaded onto the back of the repo-man's lorry.

In less than two years of trading, the whirlwind life of the Imagine software house came to a dramatic and spectacular end.

THE NAME OF THE GAME

The banner of Imagine, along with much of its workforce, was resurrected by David Ward of Ocean when he bought the name and much of the equipment from the liquidators.

Despite its self-inflicted quandaries, Imagine will be remembered for providing some truly spectacular titles in its short lifespan, rather than the unfortunate happenings that surrounded its existence.

The label, and much of the talent that was fostered, went on to enjoy prolific careers, ensuring that Imagine's legacy would be more than just scandal, avarice and misfortune.

BAD REP

The mounting uncertainty of the mega game's future was depicted by a brief outing with Imagine's sales rep in the BBC2 *Commercial Breaks* program, as she met with an apprehensive distributor regarding a vast quantity of unsold games. In true Imagine style, rather than tackle the problems at hand, she brushed them aside to concentrate on pushing the next big sale: the mega game she had apparently been promising the distributor for some time. Her abortive attempts to explain the revolutionary aspects of these new titles – that she had never even seen – clearly put the distributor on edge, particularly when she let slip that the cost would be nearly seven times that of the average computer game. He was polite for the cameras, but noticeably kept her at arms length.



ALCHEMIST

IMAGINE [1983]

» *Alchemist* was undoubtedly Imagine's crowning achievement. In an attempt to destroy an evil warlock, the Alchemist must piece together a scroll that contains the spell of destruction. His deft use of metamorphosis and spell casting allowed him to take on his enemies threatening domain.

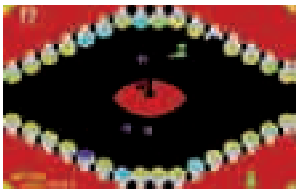
Large, well-animated sprites and terrific backdrops made Alchemist a true slice of fried gold. **90%**



BC BILL

IMAGINE [1984]

» *BC Bill* smacked of a game hacked together during the death throes of the company. The caveman wandered about the single screen coshing prospective cave-wives over the head and dragging them back to his cave for some Palaeolithic pleasures. Kids then started appearing to provide food for the passing dinosaurs and antagonism for the hirsute Neanderthal. The Flintstones was never this boring. **50%**

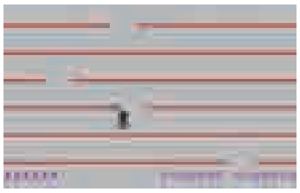


MOLAR MAUL

IMAGINE, [1983]

» A more enjoyable game than it deserved to be, probably due to being laced with the outrageously imaginative gameplay and rakish humour the Imagine team was imbued with.

As a toothbrush, you had to patrol the inside of a mouth fighting off the evil DK's as they attempt to ruin the enamel. Unusual, and not a little bit icky, Molar Maul just managed to tip the scale towards success. **60%**



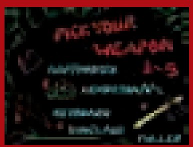
JUMPING JACK

IMAGINE [1983]

» A game that wouldn't look out of place on a 2600, this was a very basic, yet strangely addictive idea that almost certainly started life as a Donkey Kong clone.

The basic graphics left all the enjoyment down to gameplay, which involved ascending the levels by jumping through holes as they pass above Jack's head.

Enjoyable, but not one of Imagine's better titles. **66%**



AVOID LIKE THE PLAGUE

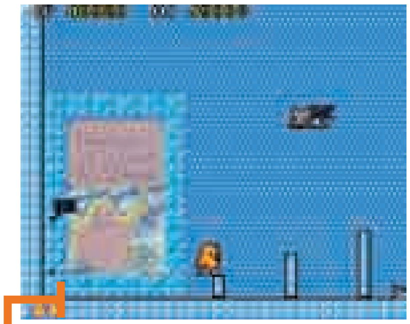
BC BILL

Quite clearly, the fate of Imagine was known to the despondent staff as they casually threw together an unfitting epitaph that would have been a rubbish handheld LCD game, never mind a waste of valuable cassette tape.

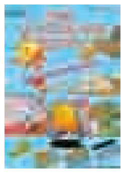
BOSS/RUSH

WHEN YOU SQUARE OFF AGAINST THAT END-OF-LEVEL BADDIE FROM YESTERYEAR...

WALLY THE WALRUS IN THE NEW ZEALAND STORY



GAME INFO



- » **FEATURED HARDWARE:** ARCADE
- » **RELEASED:** 1988
- » **PUBLISHER:** TAITO
- » **DEVELOPER:** IN-HOUSE



» Tiki navigates his way through the deadly and slippery terrain, chased by some of the spikiest monsters imaginable



» In the final run towards the end of the level, the game throws every monster it has against poor Tiki, who has to make a mad rush through the middle

Having battled his way through some of the most dangerous and unusual territory that New Zealand has to offer, Tiki the Kiwi finally arrives at the venue for his showdown with the evil Wally the walrus. Tiki had a brief encounter with the evil walrus at the beginning of the game; where he watched it kidnap and imprison all his friends. Determined to rescue them once and for all, the little bird takes his first step into the icy terrain.

The ground is treacherous, covered almost completely in ice, and the poor Kiwi finds that he's slipping at every step. Some very deft control is required to stop him from sliding from the edge of one of the platforms into one of dozens of spike-filled pits that are scattered throughout.

Things don't start off easy. A precarious bridge of platforms stretches its way into the air, forcing the beleaguered bird to jump from one platform to the next. He has little opportunity to react to the monsters around him, as even a minor trip sends him falling to the ground beneath, forcing him to retrace his steps back to the start of the bridge. With the crossing behind him, Tiki starts to ascend into the upper reaches of the mountain.

As he works his way through, the number of enemies steadily increases, forcing Tiki to jump and dive rapidly in order to avoid being spiked by a spear or hit by one of the many prickly baddies that are flying through the air.

Finally a large open plateau is reached near the top of the level. The end is in sight – but first a barrage of enemy activity must be faced as the game throws everything it can muster at Tiki in a final attempt to stop him in his tracks. This section can be a mad rush as the little bird is attacked from multiple directions. However, a smart kiwi uses this as a last opportunity to grab hold of a powerful weapon or an armed vehicle, essential in the battle that is about to begin.

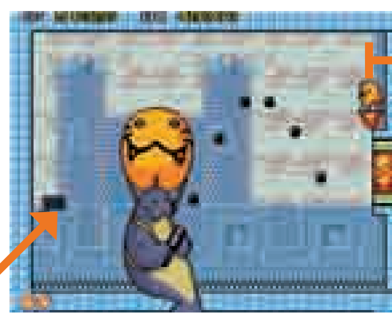
As Tiki makes his way through the final doorway into Wally's lair, he realises that it is a single huge pit, the floor of which is entirely lined with deadly spikes. The final face-off is therefore conducted in the air to avoid otherwise certain death.

Right on cue, Wally makes his appearance. He's huge and hanging from a giant inflatable balloon (well, what else did you expect?). Armed with a bazooka, Wally floats up and down in front of Tiki, apparently impervious to any weapons that Tiki fires at him. The balloon is his weak spot, however, and it is this that Tiki must target in order to finally rid the world of his evil nemesis.

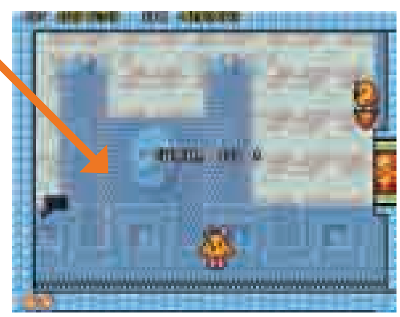
Firing shot after shot at the floating figure in front of him, Tiki keeps his distance as best as possible to avoid the repeated shots fired towards him. As he valiantly works towards his goal, the walrus floats ever closer, leaving Tiki ever decreasing amounts of room to move.

Finally, with a loud "Pop!" the balloon bursts, sending Wally plummeting to his icy fate far below. With his friends safe, Tiki, his girlfriend Phee-Phee and all of the other kiwis are finally safe. Thank you for playing, see you again!

"WALLY FLOATS UP AND DOWN IN FRONT OF TIKI, APPARENTLY IMPERVIOUS TO ANY WEAPONS"



» Wally makes his appearance, armed and dangerous, suspended above a sea of lethal spikes



» With the evil walrus vanquished, Tiki can finally be reunited with all of the friends that he rescued along the way

eMag

THE CLASSIC GAME

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG



All retro fans are equal. Whether jamming on an Amstrad or a Neo Geo, everyone loves great characters. Like Manic Miner, Mario, and Peppito the Hamburger before him, Sonic the Hedgehog is worth talking about. A thousand magazines have written a million words on him; and now Retro Gamer waxes lyrically, about his first adventure

Yuji Naka, the now forty-year old creator of *Sonic* and receiver of GDC's 2002 Life Time Achievement award, says that the original Mega Drive game is still his favourite. In various interviews for various publications, his answer is that the first *Sonic The Hedgehog* title is the one that holds that special place in his heart. With opinion divided among gamers as to which is the best, is he simply teasing us or hinting at something deeper?

The blue hedgehog's debut is certainly the purest of all the 16-bit (and upward) titles created. There was little more that could have been refined over those six major Zones, with each flowing smoothly and for the most part taking advantage of Sonic's recognisable trait of being fleet of foot. There were also difficult to access Special Stages, but the game remained uncluttered. And so with little to improve, later games simply (some would say crudely) stapled further features and elements onto a slowly bloating set of core mechanics. A sidekick named Tails, an additional adversary named knuckles (later Metal Sonic as well), the ability to transform into Super Sonic, time travelling, lock-on cartridges, the list goes on and on. By the end of the Mega Drive era some fans, while still in love with the Sonic brand, were growing somewhat dissatisfied with the way later iterations

had moved on from the original.

It's ironic to consider the mutations Sonic endured after the 16-bit generation in order to make him (or often the series) edgier and more gritty, when back in the day that's precisely what he was and where his appeal lay. Launching on the sleek jet black Genesis console, Sonic at the time was the epitome of cool. He was a "bad-assed" hedgehog with attitude and a sense of unrivalled speed. At least to the young impressionable kids and teenagers of 1991, who wished to emulate his style. Thankfully they stopped short of streaking at high speeds whilst dressed in little more than white gloves and red sneakers (and of course the obvious blue hue that comes from being naked and freezing cold).

But this was back when gangster rap urban "culture" thankfully hadn't quite yet infiltrated the quiet middle-class suburban neighbourhoods of America. It didn't need any pistol wielding "hero" with an even bigger frown, or bad language, to have appeal; to gamers of the day this was another landmark release that further strengthened Sega's reputation as being the videogame choice of a maturing generation. Sonic was perceived as having greater street "cred" compared to Nintendo's portly and family friendly Mario.

Yet today, Sega has felt the need create a darker world and characters to entice players. Some would say long gone are his more innocent days which had elegant design and uncluttered gameplay. Perhaps these are the reasons why Yuji Naka has commented that he yearns to go back to his days as a programmer, and still has such fondness for the original game?

AMERICAN METAPHOR

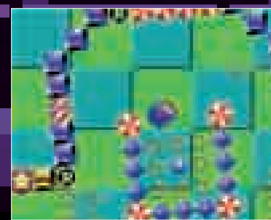
While Sonic may have been the quintessential opposite to Mario (or indeed because of this), he owes Nintendo's plumber the credit for his conception. Today the story of how Sonic came about is fairly well known, but just to recap let us take a look at what Yuji Naka said in the Famicom 20th anniversary almanac (Ohta Publishing): "One day, I left my boss a note with my idea of the kind of games I wished to make. The first on the list was a Formula 1 game, and the last one said 'an action game exceeding *Super Mario Bros*'. Then my boss called me and said 'Please make a game that would exceed *Mario*'."

He certainly had his work cut out for him, and realised that it would not be so easy to exceed the *Mario* games if he simply copied the style and form. Instead he and the team decided they had to tackle things from another angle, in this case dealing with the one thing Yuji Naka disliked about Miyamoto's creation. The speed, or lack thereof. It's not that he didn't find *Mario* games fun, quite the opposite, but it bored him that the early levels always had to be played right through, with no way of speeding things up. Their goal was to create a feeling of being able to rush through everything.

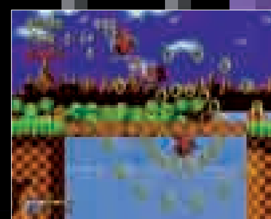
It took the team three months to master the technology, which back



» Who can forget the loop-de-loops? One of the most memorable elements in the series



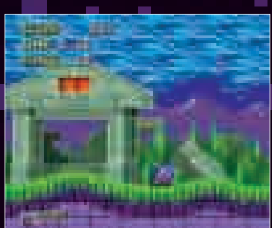
» The Special Stages, within which are the precious gems. Collect them all!



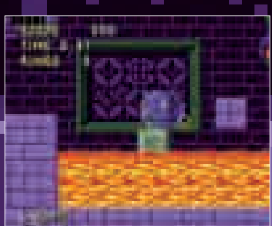
» Collect rings that double as life energy? Possibly the best design decision. Ever

"I LEFT MY BOSS A NOTE WITH MY IDEA OF THE KIND OF GAMES I WISHED TO MAKE. THE LAST ONE SAID 'AN ACTION GAME EXCEEDING SUPER MARIO BROS'."

YUJI NAKA



» Retro Gamer's attorney advises no caption be given here

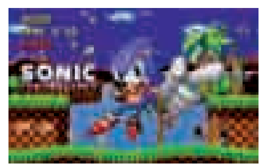


» Underground and filled with lava? Sonic must be visiting the *RG* office again!



» PUSH! For the love of pies, push harder you fool! This article depends on it!

IN THE KNOW



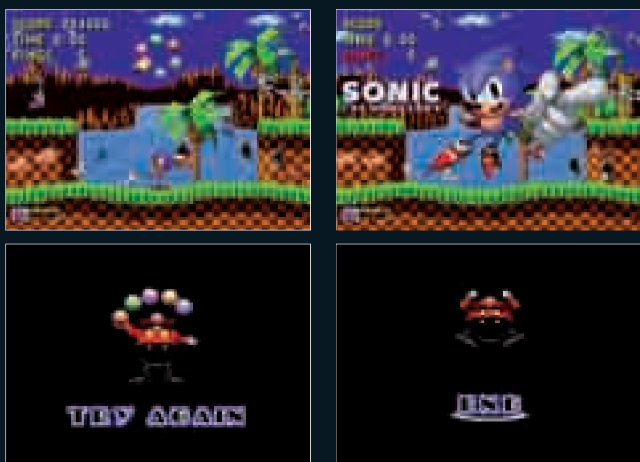
» **PUBLISHER:** SEGA
» **DEVELOPER:** SONIC TEAM
» **YEAR RELEASED:** 1991
» **GENRE:** PLATFORMER
» **EXPECT TO PAY:** £2



THE CLASSIC GAME
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

"RUN JUST FOR FUN?"

We've all been there. Discovering we missed some vital gaming item(s), an item that in our minds we believed would bestow upon us a sensation of gaming euphoria. So when you complete Sonic The Hedgehog and discover you only collected one of six gems from those annoying rotating Special Stages, you vow to practice until you've perfected the game and unlocked the secret ending. Retro Gamer, being a reflective historical publication, is going to reveal this elusive conclusion. Sadly, it's utterly rubbish. Having slogged away for months, practicing in the early hours of the barely dawn morning, finally bearing witness to it is disappointing (see screenshots). Reaching the Special Stages required slow methodical playing, while the stages themselves frustrated beyond belief. Seeing Robotnik jumping up and down was not rewarding. For that kind of work we'd expect Malt Whiskey to pour forth from the TV (though milkshake would have sufficed when we were 12).



then was actually the average length of time it took for most games to finish development. The main protagonist started off not as a hedgehog, but a speeding rabbit. Form followed function with regards to Sonic becoming the beloved Erinaceidae we all recognise today. As the their ideas grew, they wanted the character to defeat enemies as he came across them. Hence the idea of using an animal that curls into a ball and where the thorns on his back would add strength while rolling. This, Yuji Naka says, is one of his favourite elements in the game. He poured his heart and soul into the blue guy's first outing, every idea that he had, and it's certainly evident.

The most striking thing about the design and Yuji Naka's attitude to the games is that within its narrative without words the game is a metaphor for American culture and their way of thinking. This again contrasts starkly against the *Mario* games, which Yuji Naka says instead represent the Japanese mentality and way of life. He also cites this as one of the reasons why Sonic, for quite a long time, was always more popular in America than in Japan.

Mario evoked the feeling of Japanese seriousness, formality, perfection and their strict code of discipline. When jumping vertically it was difficult for Mario to move left and right, unless sufficient momentum had been built up. The architecture of the world was for the most part sensible and cleanly placed; there was no flamboyant loops or fantastical structures (even when you consider the fantasy setting). But above all else, when Mario was hit more than twice he died. This meant that the game ended often and afforded the player little luxury with regards to how he played within the virtual world. As well as Sonic's overt flamboyance and speed, the other major difference was that the golden rings he collected, unlike Mario's coins, doubled as a form of life gauge.

Getting hit resulted in all rings being thrown in every direction, but one could always avoid death as long as they held a single ring. By holding at least one ring there was no fear of death, and each additional ring collected slowly added to the player's sense of power and immortality. This resulted in a major increase of the satisfaction ratio for each acquisition, far greater than Mario's coin collecting, which required one-hundred before any benefit was felt. This more hazy tone of risk, reward and punishment, was very much in tune with Americans' sense of bravado. Caution could be thrown to the wind as Sonic sped through the levels, the first one taking less than 35 seconds if you're good. In fact, *Sonic The Hedgehog* could never have worked any



» Honest, we thought hedgehogs could breath underwater. We swear!



» Sonic and his close friend 'Drill Face' look at the ceiling and think to themselves, "Hmm, needs more drapes!

THEY SAID:

"DEFINITELY, WITHOUT A DOUBT, POSITIVELY THE MOST INCREDIBLE ACTION GAME EVER CREATED FOR THE GENESIS! INCREDIBLE SPEED, PLENTY OF TECHNIQUE AND MORE THAN ENOUGH CHALLENGE AWAIT OUR SUPER SONIC."

STEVE HARRIS, EGM, JULY 1991



other way, since the ability to re-collect thrown rings after getting hit meant that the flow of momentum was seldom slowed for long. This made gameplay extremely fluid, more so than perhaps any other game at the time. Even when knocked down, it was a case of simply getting right back up and trying to run even faster. It was a design decision of seldom surpassed excellence, one which can never be overstated and one that to our recollection has never been copied.

YOU HAD TO FEEL IT

This initial outing had other things going for it too. There was only one main boss throughout the game. Dr Robotnik, also known as Dr Eggman (a subtle reference to Lennon's "I am the Walrus" perhaps?), continually stands in the way of Sonic's progress through the levels. There were also secrets to discover, such as the Special Stages and gems held within. Finish the first act of any stage with 50 or more rings, and when it came to the Robotnik sign there would be a giant ring to jump into, whisking you away to one of the six Special Stages. It really is a game that needed to be played at the time, since while today those rotating bonuses look crude, at the time they were a technical marvel. They were also excruciatingly frustrating, especially after months of practice when you finally finish the game having found every gem.

You can spend an age describing the finer mechanics and small elements in the first *Sonic* game, but really you have to feel it. Seeing the rapidly parallax scrolling blocky backgrounds juxtaposed against the higher resolution foreground, as Sonic ascends through the air catching rings and taking down enemies. There was an unabashed sense of fun to be had hurtling through the first stage's bright blue skies while listening to J-Pop legend Masato Nakamura's uplifting music. The sheer amount of colour on screen at once, it pushed the Mega Drive to the edge and back and allayed any fears of it being inferior to the SNES.

This undeniable sense of fun unsurprisingly had an influence on others. The game inspired the naming of a DNA protein (Sonic Hedgehog), some ill-fated Speedy Gonzales titles (that missed the point entirely!), and, of course, the animal mascot craze that continues to this day (don't argue, there may be earlier animal mascots but Sonic did the most for the animal emancipation movement). Later games may have changed the hedgehog, and maybe Yuji Naka has reason to still regard the earliest game as the best of the series. It's nearly 15 years old now, but you really should go out and find the first instalment to revel in those rolling green hills and loops all over again.

"THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING?"

Shortly after it had been released, Sega's mascot played a fairly big role in South African children's TV. Despite the Mega Drive launching in 1989, it was the titular blue protagonist's emergence in 1991 that propelled system sales. And everyone wanted to capitalise on his popularity. A subsidiary-based kids television segment called K-TV, which was part of South Africa's official subscription-based Movie Network channel or M-NET, held a special themed competition on Saturday mornings alongside the American and Japanese cartoons. The set-up was that you'd phone in and if selected, would then play *Sonic The Hedgehog* on the TV, controlling him via your phone. Prizes were awarded based on the number of rings held at the end of a strict time limit. If you had more than 50, you'd win the grand prize of a new Mega Drive with games. Other prizes included a Master System with games, TV shirts, toys and other related goodies. Since the controls were quite clearly very unresponsive, and few knew of the four secret monitors close to the start due to it being so new, it was incredibly difficult to reach that fabled goal.

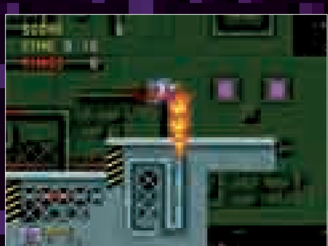


MORE SONIC

OTHER GAMES IN THE SERIES:
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2
Sonic the Hedgehog 3
Sonic & Knuckles
Sonic CD
Sonic 3D
Sonic Spinball
Sonic Drift
Sonic Jam
Sonic Adventure 1
Sonic Adventure 2
and dozens more!

THE WEB

With Sega's blue mascot being so popular it's unsurprising to find plenty of websites dedicated to him. The best are:
www.sega.com/sonic
www.sonicstadium.org
www.sonihq.org



» This reminds *Retro Gamer* of the time mother bought us pet hedgehogs



» Chase down Doctor Eggman and scramble his plans for world domination!



» Hedgehogs are for life. Never flush them down the toilet just because you're bored of them. Unless they're dead of course

"LAUNCHING ON THE SLEEK JET BLACK GENESIS CONSOLE, SONIC AT THE TIME WAS THE EPITOME OF COOL."

DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

NEARLY EVERY OTHER SONIC GAME
NEARLY EVERY SEGA MACHINE
1991-PRESENT

NIGHTS
SEGA SATURN
1997

BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG
GAMECUBE
2003

CLASSIC GAMING ON A BUDGET

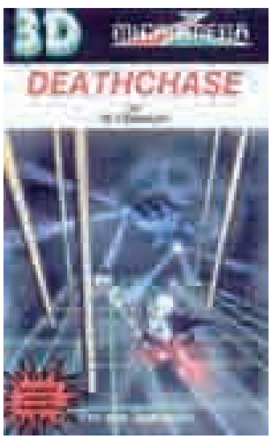
CHEAP AS CHIPS



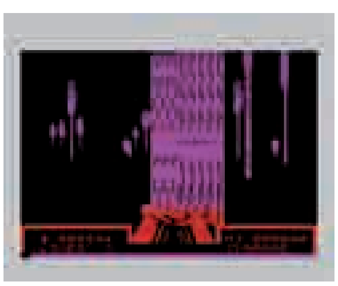
If there's one thing we've learned about retrogaming, it's that your money can stretch an amazingly long way if you actually want it to. Granted, a mint copy of *Radiant Silvergun* is going to cost you a small fortune, but there are plenty of other worthy titles that can picked up for less than a fiver. This month's bargain is Mervyn J. Escourt's fantastic *3D Deathchase*. It costs less than a bumper pack of Walkers Crisps and lasts a darned sight longer.

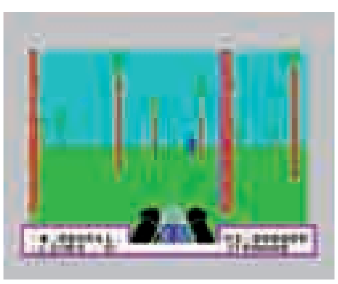
3D DEATHCHASE

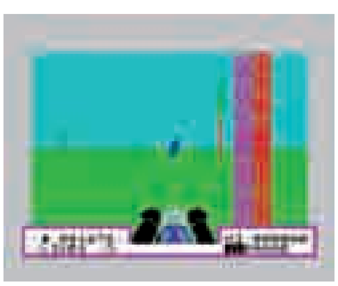
- **SYSTEM:** ZX SPECTRUM
- **RELEASED:** 1983
- **PUBLISHER:** MICROMEGA
- **DEVELOPER:** MERVYN J ESTCOURT

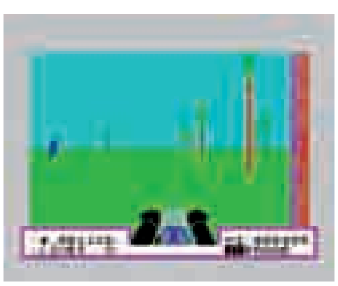


» Don't worry, there's nothing wrong with your screen, you've just crashed… hard…





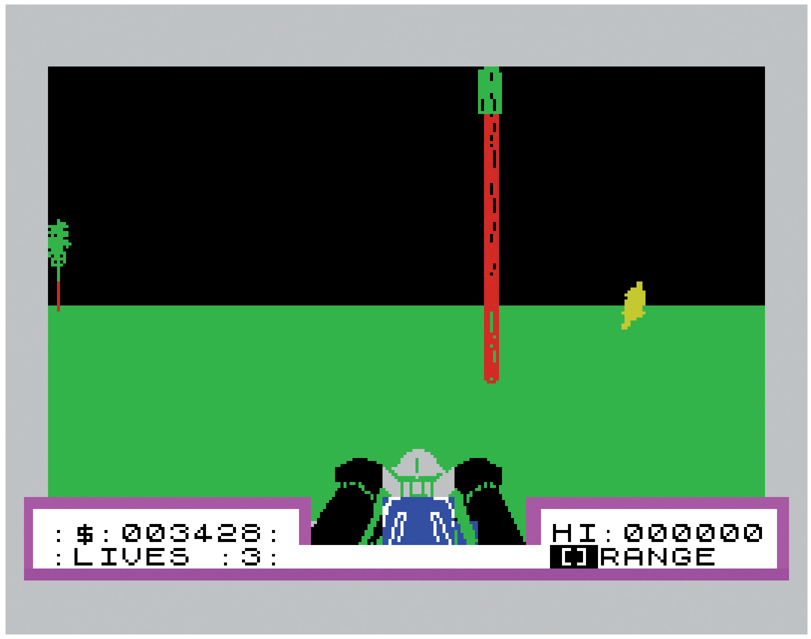




3D Deathchase should never have been as good as it was. Controls were simple beyond belief, nothing ever attacked you and the only things you had to avoid were trees – hardly the sort of description you would expect of one of the greatest (if not *the* greatest) Spectrum games ever made.

Nevertheless, even the briefest of plays today will convince you beyond a shadow of a doubt that it remains one of the most exhilarating videogames ever made; and when it can be purchased for less than £1.50, hell, it just becomes even more enticing. Despite having the sort of goals that could be written on the back of a fag packet – shoot motorcycles for bounty money, avoid the game's many trees – *3D Deathchase* remains an utterly absorbing experience that dares you to put it down for something, anything a little more sedate. You'll fail of course…

What made it so enticing is that it lulled you into a false sense of security, and made you believe that it was much simpler to play than it actually was. While you constantly sped after enemy motorcyclists, they never presented any actual danger to you, and although later levels threw up tanks and helicopters (which could be shot for bonus points) there was still never any danger other than hitting those damn trees, and let's face it, you weren't going to do that… Right?



» Ah *Night Patrol*, those trees are even harder to dodge at night so be careful

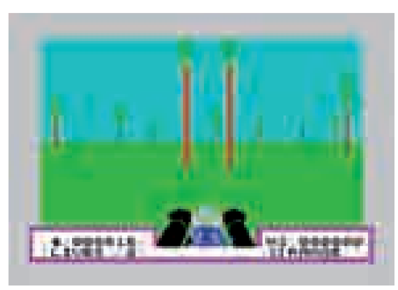
Think again. Despite their solid roots those pesky trees constantly got in your bike's way and would cause all sorts of expletives to erupt from your lips. Not because the gameplay was unfair, or that the controls were unresponsive. No, it was simply because it was your own damn fault for driving into them, and you knew it.

Then of course there's the whole *Star Wars* factor to consider.

The arrival of *3D Deathchase* suddenly gave you the chance to re-enact all those Speeder Bike chases you'd just watched on *Return of the Jedi*. Granted the blobby bikes you were chasing didn't exactly look like deadly imperial speeders, but imagination was the key. After a while you were simply immersed in the moment and had totally convinced yourself that you were zooming through the forest of Endor and that the blocky handlebars of your bike had morphed into the sleek controls of a Speeder Bike. Hey, when the graphics were as simple to look at as those in *3D Deathchase* a little imagination went a very long way…

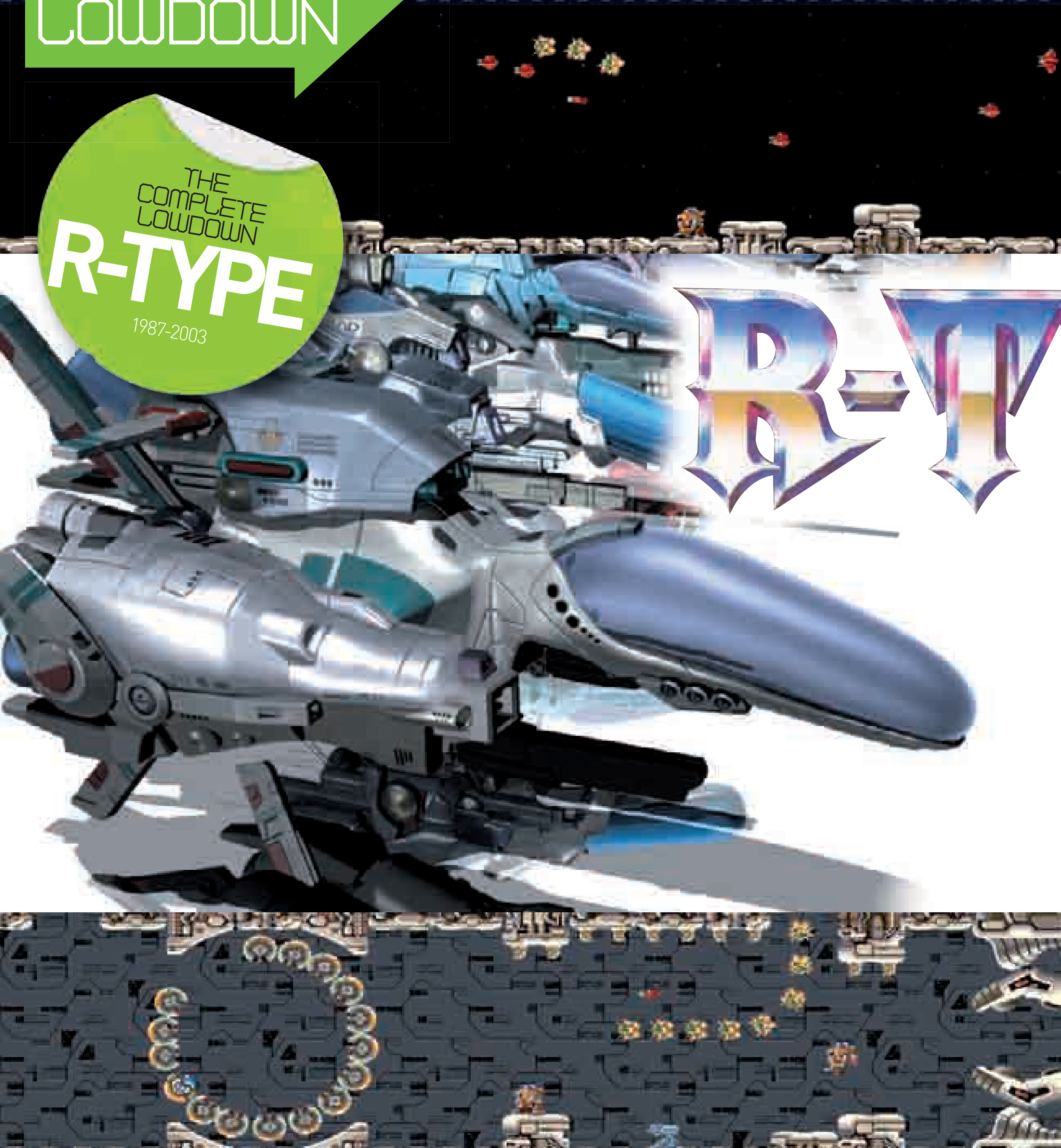
The graphics may have been simple to look at, but that didn't mean that the effect they created wasn't impressive. This is because it featured some amazingly smooth scrolling for the humble Spectrum, and while the aforementioned motorcyclists weren't the most detailed sprites we've ever seen it just didn't matter. It was the gameplay that was instrumental to *3D Deathchase's* enjoyment and Estcourt had delivered in spades. Racing along at breakneck speeds (being sure to keep an eye on your ever rising bounty) was all that mattered; close shaves with trees had you on the edge of your seat, and as you progressed through the later levels the forest became incredibly dense, thus heightening the excitement even further.

Even today, *3D Deathchase* remains an exciting racer and has definitely survived the harsh ravages of time. We may have next-generation games that feature frightfully realistic visuals and there are plenty of *Star Wars* games that feature official Speeder Bike stages, but it matters not one jot. This game is as important today as it ever was, the fact it can be picked up for less than a couple of quid makes it even better.



» As you progress further into the game the forest gets denser and denser

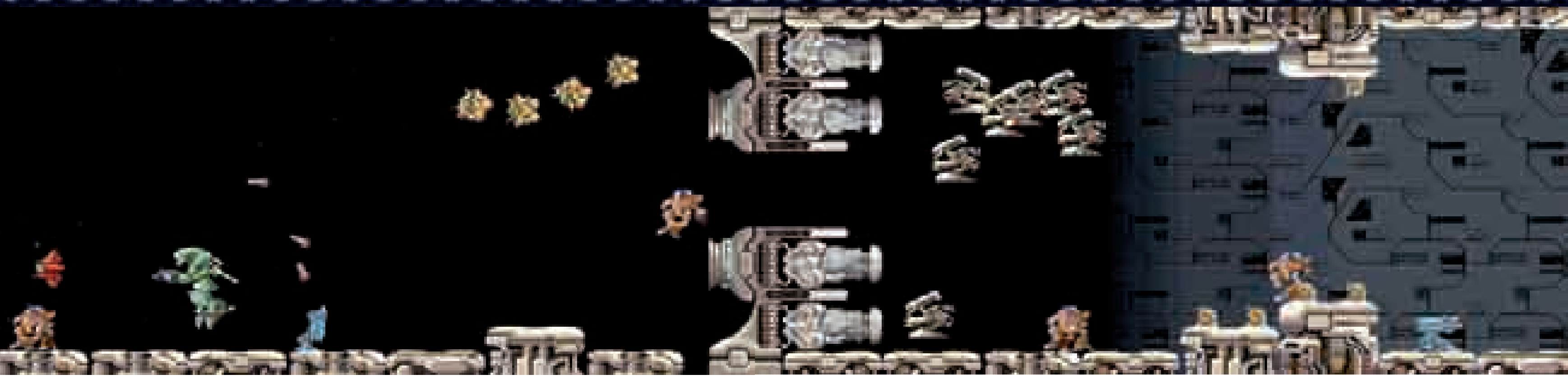
eMag



THE COMPLETE LOWDOWN

R-TYPE

1987-2003





AN AWE-INSPIRING BLEND OF UNCONTROLLED BIOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTATION AND FUTURISTIC WAR MACHINES, THIS WAS THE GAME THAT FINALLY PROVED DECENT HOME CONVERSIONS OF THE FINEST ARCADE GAMES WERE ACTUALLY POSSIBLE. IN TRIBUTE TO IREM'S MAGNUM OPUS OF A SHOOT-'EM-UP, WE TAKE A TRANS-DIMENSIONAL TRIP BACK TO 1987 TO CELEBRATE THE POWERHOUSE R-9 FIGHTER THAT REPEATEDLY THWARTED THE GROTESQUE BYDO EMPIRE

Although Japanese developer Irem (an acronym of 'Innovation in Recreational Electronic Media') has never been placed on a pedestal as high as that of Taito, Nintendo or Sega, it has made a major contribution to videogame culture right from the outset in the late 70s. Making its mark with more than a few space-based shoot-'em-ups, Irem established itself slowly but surely during the soulless gaming days of the 1980s. By the time the industry was clawing its way back into life in 1987, Irem was standing ready with the game that would become its crowning achievement, *R-Type*.

When discussing the relevance of *R-Type*, there is always a temptation to try and augment its significance with talk about an introduction of strategic elements to the scrolling shooter. We're going to stick our necks out and say this is, in fact, simply an attempt for gaming intellectuals to make themselves feel better about enjoying the mindless carnage that is part and parcel of any good shmup. What *R-Type* actually brought to the genre is something far more important and exciting than rubbing ones chin while supposedly 'strategising' over how to shoot lasers at gratuitously aggressive aliens; guns, really big guns!

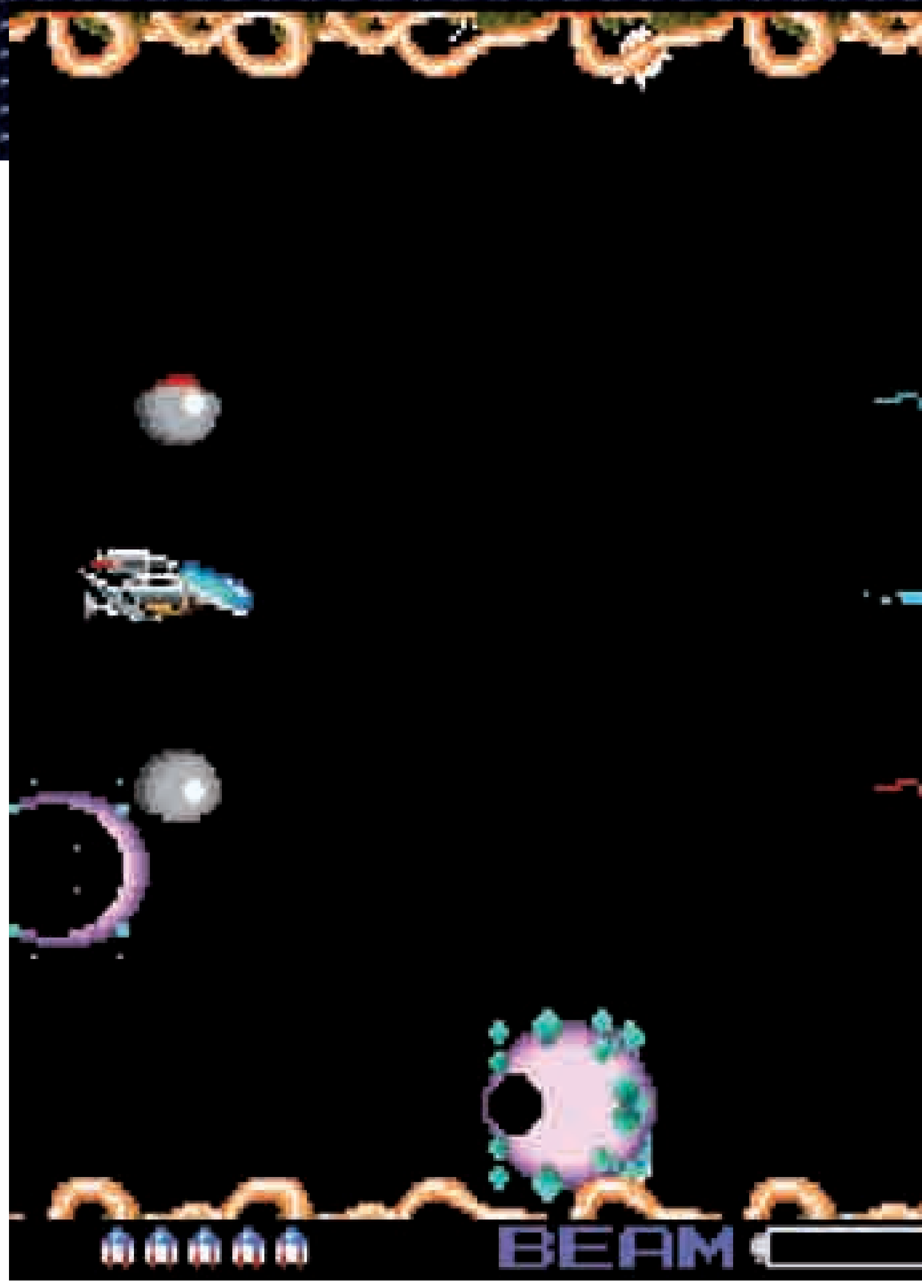
The exceptional aspect of Irem's tidy little spaceship was its stupendous – and inventive – overabundance of firepower. The standard shoot-'em-up's military tactic of sending a single fighter to repel an invading enemy force seems considerably more practical when that fighter is armed to the back teeth with xenocidal fury. This was achieved through the invention of the indestructible, detachable satellite known as the Force weapon. Built of living, biological components contained by 'force rods', effective use of this innovative piece of destructive hardware was made by attaching it to either the front or rear of the ship, where it would then augment the fighter's firepower exponentially. It could also be launched across the screen to assail the spine-chilling antagonists first hand, which is probably where the fanciful notion of strategic gameplay was founded.

On top of this, the fighter's own laser cannons could be amplified by holding down the fire button until fully charged. Although this took valuable seconds, the resulting blast from the Wave Cannon was enough to cast an entire screen full of aggressors asunder. The damage from deploying a full Wave Cannon was so addictive that many a life was lost at the hands of a lowly generic drone while compulsively waiting for the damn thing to charge.

It was this simple, yet revolutionary, weaponry that changed the face of shoot-'em-ups forever; providing such rich inspiration that the dozens, if not hundreds, of clones that sprang up in the wake of *R-Type* were themselves massively successful, all thanks to their surrogate grandfather's profound impact and influence.

Many other shmups of the time had attempted to keep the genre fresh by varying methods, though mainly through increasing the speed of gameplay and ensuing assaults in an attempt to overwhelm the player into a frenzied seizure. *R-Type* took an unexpected step back from this trend and adopted a





"R-TYPE FINAL IS MORE THAN JUST A NEXT GENERATION UPDATE TO THE OLD FRANCHISE; IT IS EVERYTHING THAT THE ORIGINAL GAME COULD EVER WANT TO BE, PACKED WITH RECOGNISABLE NUANCES WRAPPED UP IN A BIO-MECHANICAL SKIN"

relatively steady scrolling speed and almost lethargic character movements. The real difficulty was in navigating the diverse terrain. Annihilating every single entity was not an advised tactic; merely surviving to the end of the level with a credit intact was enough for even the most seasoned exponent.

Although it may not sound like anything spectacular to someone unfamiliar with the franchise, these few and simple mechanics of gameplay are what made *R-Type* stand out from the gathering crowd of popular shoot-'em-ups. Not content with eternally redefining shmup weaponry, however, Irem also adorned its magnificent space quest with astonishing character, level and environment designs that could rival the works of H.R. Giger.

BY THE BYDO

Initially, the back-story of *R-Type* was limited to the opening scene's call to arms of "Blast off and strike the evil Bydo Empire!" As with all good visual media, however, the story of the lonely R-9 fighter is shown to us, rather than told; mainly through an inside glance at its enemy's realm. A profane crossbreeding of sophisticated technology and insectoid organisms creates a breathtaking biomechanical environment, as horrifically beautiful as it is hostile. This unholy union of metal and flesh spawns some of the most unpleasant, yet aesthetic, marvels of unrestrained science; giving the impression that humanity's enemy is not one of malice or conquest, but simply an unconscious hive-mind following a basic instinct to expand its potential for survival.

Ranging from scuttling, larval drones and miniaturised machines to monstrous, pulsating behemoths and extensive armoured dreadnoughts, the relentless Bydo Empire is replete with an awe-inspiring diversity of horrid inventiveness.

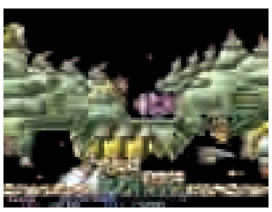
Over the series, we discovered that the Bydo Empire began as a biological weapon engineered by mankind in the 26th Century to throw against our enemies in another galaxy. Unfortunately, the weapon never made it out of our system and was lost in a temporal wormhole where the powerful biological material evolved, returning to the past to attack humanity in the 22nd Century. Not an easy enemy to keep at bay, the R-9 (and its descendants) have been called upon to quell the Empire on many occasions over the sixteen-year lifespan of the franchise.

Not wanting its newly addicted fan base to cool down, Irem had the arcade sequel ready within a year, though its reception was typical of many such follow-up games.

This was also the year when the first title was released into the home market, and will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the most consistently faithful arcade conversions of all time. There is yet to be an R-Type duffer on any system, from the Spectrum to PlayStation2 and everything in between. Perhaps the conversion was made easier by the leisurely pace of the original game, but it is true to say that not a single designer, programmer, artist or tea lady involved in an *R-Type* conversion put in anything less than 153% into it.

THE SERIES HAS LANDED

The game was ported across the board for the 1988 home release; the Spectrum, C64, CPC, Master System, PC Engine, Amiga, ST and MSX all saw equally authentic versions, with several, including the Master System and Game Boy receiving an extra exclusive stage, further compounding the game's popularity and undoubtedly favouring our judgement of



» The same behemoth Bydo frigate entirely fills level 3 of both the original game and *R-Type Final*



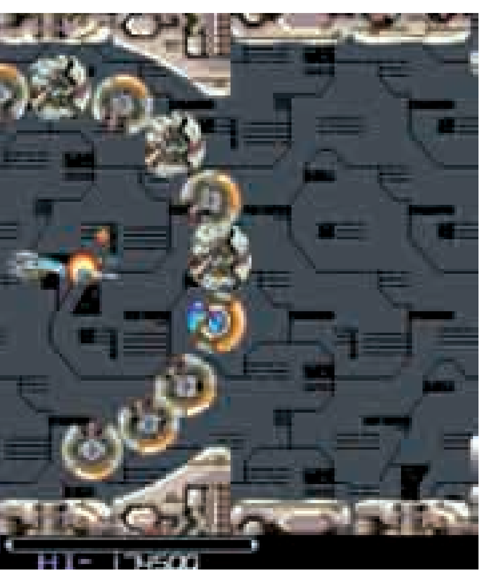
WHAT TYPE?

The scientific term 'R-Type' refers to a society or species that reproduces in quantity rather than quality (such as insects), where a high risk existence, either from predators or hostile environment, means a low life expectancy, so offspring are produced quickly and in high numbers to ensure survival of the species. The game is actually named after the antagonists, rather than the player's ship. The alternative to this is 'K-Type', whereby the quality of fewer offspring's lives (ensuring a low mortality rate) is paramount, as with humans. R-type is also a designation for a certain type of asteroid.





R-Type as we look back at it now. What is of particular note is the lack of a NES port, even though it was through a Nintendo license



that we saw *R-Type* arcade machines here and in the US. In recompense, it seems Irem allowed Nintendo's first taste of Bydo bashing delights in 1991 to be a unique update of *R-Type II* rather than a direct port, granting staunch SNES fans some small compensation for their wait.

The following year, 1992, saw the Japanese-only release of the second arcade sequel dubbed 'R-Type Leo'. This was a proper sequel, rather than another update, which, it has to be said, left a slightly unpleasant taste in the mouth of ardent fans. Irem made a brave move with *Leo* to avoid becoming a cliché and perhaps changed some things that shouldn't have been changed – like the Force weapon. This is probably due to the increasing number of clones with similar weaponry that were appearing on the arcade floor, though it may also explain *Leo's* reduced popularity and the reason it never made it off the homeland shores.

In 1999, the PlayStation was host to an important development in the life of the R-9 fighter when the game went 3D. At the time, all games were being forced to exist in an extra dimension, but rather shrewdly, *R-Type Delta* only used the polygonal capabilities of the 'Station to enhance its look, rather than alter the gameplay. Once again, the *R-Type* franchise had mutated and found new strength.

DO YOU
REMEMBER WHEN...



HOME SWEET HOME
If you've seen this screen, then you're a cheat like us. Still, it's a spectacular moment when the screen fills with R-9 Fighters on completion of the original, although it does make you want lean out of the window and shout "Where the hell have you lot been?"

"IREM MADE A BRAVE MOVE WITH LEO TO AVOID BECOMING A CLICHÉ AND PERHAPS CHANGED SOME THINGS THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN CHANGED – LIKE THE FORCE WEAPON"



» The large pincer-shaped devices at the beginning or *R-Type's* first level were a popular design in the advertising literature

» While R-*Type* has received many superb conversions over the years, special mention must go to the Spectrum version



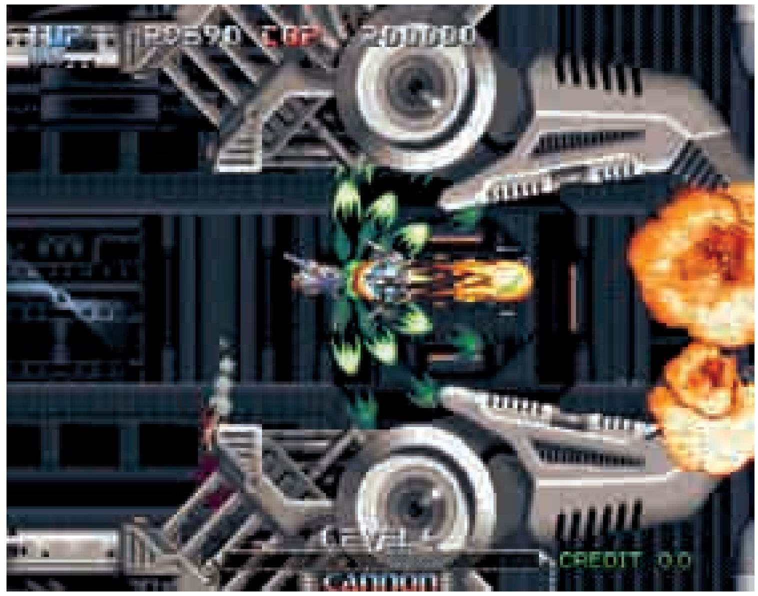


BIG BOSS

Of all the bizarre and wonderful characters in *R-Type*, none has made such a prolific and notable appearance as that of Dobkeratops, the end of level one boss from the original game. He is considered so important that he has adorned almost every box and flyer for the dozens of versions of the game. Also known as the Doppelganger, Gladiator and Krell, this unfortunate beast has suffered at the business end of the R-9's cannons in every outing, and a visible toll appears to have been taken. By the time we see him in *R-Type Final*, Dobkeratops has gone from proud space dweller to being kept in a mammoth fish tank laden with life support equipment on the off chance that yet another solitary craft happens into the Bydo lair in need of a damn good thrashing.

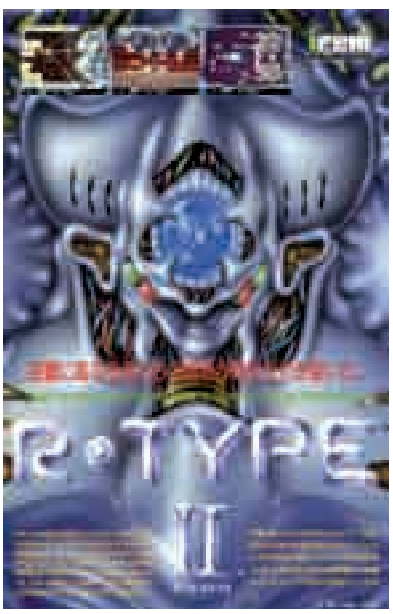
Irem made a bold decision in 2003 and brought its long-lived and best loved series to a spectacular conclusion with *R-Type Final*. Although the feeling of aerial skill that was felt from navigating the diverse terrains of the early games is diminished (now the game effectively steers the craft), the monumental number of available ships and weaponry more than compensates. There are one hundred different ships for the aspiring war hero to choose from (which are unlocked during progress), each with different Wave Cannons and Force weapons that must be carefully chosen for each level if the Empire is to be thwarted once and for all. *R-Type Final* is more than just a next generation update to the old franchise; it is everything that the original game could ever want to be, packed with recognisable nuances wrapped up in a bio-mechanical skin that demonstrates the mind-boggling vileness of the invading R-Type in all its menacing, insectoid, mechanised glory.

The phenomenon of the *R-Type* series has sustained itself by consistently and unswervingly maintaining its own high standard for over 16 years, proving above all else that great games can be great forever.



COPYCATS

Naturally, a game as groundbreaking as *R-Type* was bound to spawn a host of clones, but what's unusual is the quality of the shooters inspired by Irem's masterpiece. When the series reached its finale on the PS2, Irem graciously gave a nod to many of the games that had effectively copied them by including their fighters as playable ships. Of particular note are 1991's *Gallop - Armed Police Unit* and 1988's *Image Fight*. Also motivated by the new direction of the R-9 were *Katakis* (whose creator was subsequently hired by Irem), *Last Resort* which used the Neo Geo's graphics to the full (although the ship looked like a Ford Capri) and the button abusing *Pulstar*, all terrific games that wouldn't be here if it weren't for *R-Type*.



» The Japanese artwork for the *R-Type* series has always looked stunning; *R-Type II* was no different



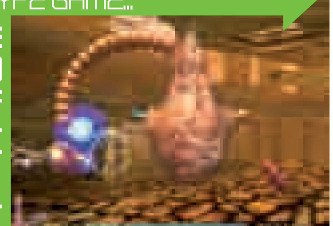
» *R-Type II* is perhaps one of the most frustratingly tough shooters ever made. You'll need the patience of a saint to complete it



» *Pulstar* placed a slinky, green haired manga babe at the helm of the ship

"INITIALLY, THE BACK-STORY OF R-TYPE WAS LIMITED TO THE OPENING SCENE'S CALL TO ARMS OF "BLAST OFF AND STRIKE THE EVIL BYDO EMPIRE!"

PLAY THIS... IF YOU PLAY ONE R-TYPE GAME...



R-TYPE FINAL - PLAYSTATION2

Perhaps it didn't stretch the PS2 to its limits, but approaching *R-Type Final* as an alternative to playing the original provides you with a first-rate side-scrolling shooter, replete with all the advanced ultra-tech and vile organic half-life that made the original what it was. A swan song that graciously bows its head to the history of the shmup.

R-TYPE FAMILY TREE



No.1

R-TYPE

System: Arcade
Year Released: 1987

R-Type has received a staggering amount of conversions over the years and appeared on virtually all major home formats. Stand out conversions include the ZX Spectrum, PC Engine, PlayStation, Sharp 6800 and Sega Master System (which had an exclusive extra level Handheld gamers may want to check out *R-Type DX* for the Game Boy as it combines the first two games on one handy cartridge and also throws in an extra stage.

R-TYPE II

System: Arcade • **Year Released:** 1988

R-Type II suffered from a common affliction many game sequels of the day were prone to. Not to say that it wasn't a great game, but in retrospect it is regarded as more of an update than a sequel. The Wave Cannon was given an extra level of charge and the enemy was replenished, though the difficulty level was also increased from the already nightmarish levels of the original, which could discourage all but the most avid fans.

SUPER R-TYPE

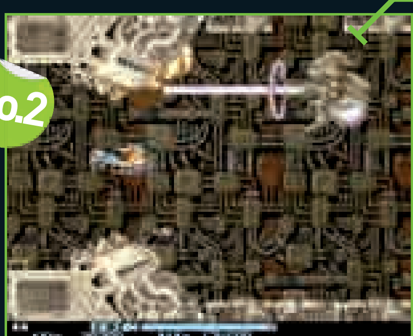
System: SNES • **Year Released:** 1991

Nintendo's machines had been noticeable by their lack of an *R-Type* game. When it finally came, as an updated *R-Type II*, the changes (such as an additional level at the beginning) were poor reimbursement for an almost fatal flaw in the new game design. Although faithful to its arcade grandfather, the already immensely difficult game was made even harder in *Super R-Type* by the removal (or failure to instate) mid level checkpoints, meaning every level had to be completed in a single life!

R-TYPE LEO

System: Arcade • **Year Released:** 1992

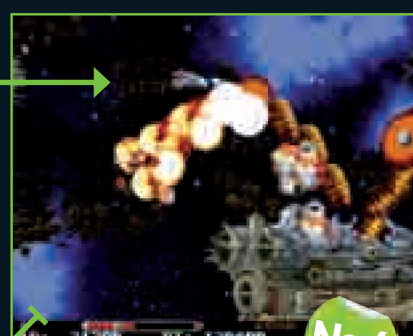
1992 saw the Japanese-only release of the second arcade sequel. This was another great update to the original engine, with brighter colours and more vivid graphics, though aficionados were mildly incensed by the removal of the Force weapon. When compared to *R-Type II*, however, it becomes apparent the Irem had to differ from the previous games, so Leo should be considered a superb shooter in its own right. Unbelievable background artwork alone makes this game worth playing through to the end.



No.2



No.3



No.4

R-TYPE III – THE THIRD LIGHTNING

System: SNES • **Year Released:** 1994

To make up for the previous SNES appearance of the trusty R-9 war machine, *R-Type III – The Third Lightening* delivered an exceptional instalment of the series that made full use of all the console's resources with plenty of Mode 7, vividly detailed graphics, inspired level designs and a kick ass soundtrack. Its introduction of selectable Force weapons also made a huge impact on the series.

R-TYPE DELTA

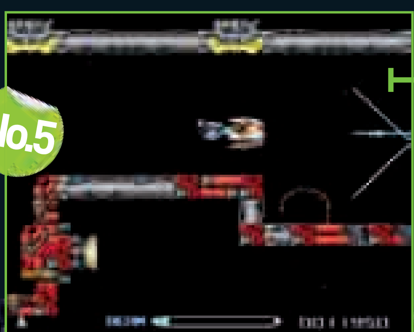
System: PlayStation • **Year Released:** 1999

Essentially, *Delta* still played as if it were a 2D shooter; only the fighter followed a less direct path as it was guided automatically in and around the Bydo lair, while the enemies would dance to and from the background, immersing the fighter in the hostile realm in a way that the previous level designs could not achieve. The selectable Force rod concept from the Third Lightning was also retained, although *Delta* also provided the option of three different ships.

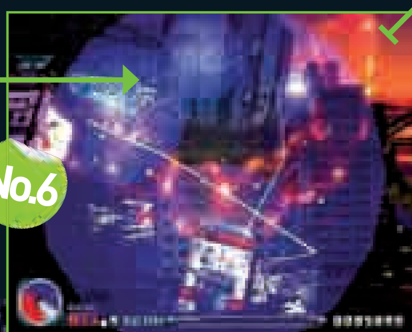
R-TYPE FINAL

System: PlayStation 2 • **Year Released:** 2003

Similar in vein to *Delta*, yet combining a plethora of elements from across the spectrum and giving the invading army an all new, disgusting and technological makeover. The world of *R-Type Final* is a beautifully realised version of the original 2D levels, from the pulsating, larval organisms growing out of the walls to the gargantuan, level-spanning warship descending onto the panicked streets of Earth. Everything you could want from *R-Type* with a bow on top.



No.5



No.6



No.7

BATMAN

"I HATE BEING WRONG"



- » **PUBLISHER** OCEAN
- » **RELEASED:** 1989
- » **GENRE:** PLATFORMER/DRIVING
- » **FEATURED HARDWARE:** AMIGA
- » **EXPECT TO PAY:** £2+



HISTORY

Ocean's *Batman* was a bit of a watershed for me. It was one of the first ever film licences to truly capture the spirit of the movie it was based on, it featured some of the most astounding visuals I'd seen outside of the arcades and made me realise that I had to own an Amiga by any means necessary.

While I'd been following the arrival of the Amiga in various magazines, I was more than happy with my faithful Sega Master System (the one that came with that built-in Snail Maze game) and was convinced that I had no need to hassle my parents for yet another expensive computer – how wrong I was…

Arriving at my mate's house, I found him in his bedroom with a grin that almost took in his ears. "Honestly mate, you're not going to believe this, it's like being in the movie." Unconvinced, I sat myself down and waited for the game to finish loading.

After an agonising wait the intro screen finally appeared and I was immediately impressed. The music was fantastic and the sampled speech easily the clearest I'd ever heard. Once the main game started however, I came down to earth a little. Sure it looked nice, but it seemed a little slow and felt clunky to control (I've never liked using keyboards to play games). Almost reading my mind, my friend took over at the keyboard (he'd already busted his joystick) and promised that "the best was yet to come". Skilfully manoeuvring his way around the chemical factory, he completed the level and sat back with a satisfied look on his face.

The next moment was simply amazing. The Batmobile suddenly hurtled through the streets of Gotham City at a phenomenal rate and try as I might, I just couldn't pull my eyes from the TV screen. Mesmerised by the slick visuals, no words come out; I was simply stunned by the magnificence that was unfolding before me. My Master System all but forgotten, I was mentally trying to work out how many cars I'd need to wash to get an Amiga…




DISTANCE
94.0
TIME





Year Released: 1978

Original Price: £169

Buy it now for: £30+

Associated Magazines: TV Gamer

Why the Atari 2600 was great… Even today the Atari 2600 is a thing of beauty. Built to last and featuring that famous wooden veneer, few things in life could give us as much pleasure as a day spent in front of the TV playing *Space Invaders* or *Combat*. It may have all ended in tears for Atari, but the 2600 remains one of the defining aspects of its legacy.





ATARI 2600

CHANCES ARE THAT YOU OWNED THE ATARI 2600 – THE BEHEMOTH OF THE GAMING INDUSTRY FROM THE GENIUS THAT IS NOLAN BUSHNELL AND A LEGEND IN ITS OWN RIGHT. THE 2600 WAS TO BECOME AN OVERNIGHT SENSATION, FORGED MILLIONS OF MINDS TO THE WONDROUS BEAUTY OF VIDEOGAMES AS DETAILED IN THIS SPECIAL RETROSPECTIVE...



To this day, the Atari 2600 VCS (video computer system) is a gaming phenomenon, which in the late-1970s, was a multi-million dollar industry with over thirty million consoles sold worldwide and hundreds of millions of cartridges produced over three decades. Quite literally, if it wasn't for the Atari 2600 that made home videogaming for the masses on an affordable budget possible, then today's videogaming industry – which is more profitable than the movie and music industry combined – might have been a different story. Whereas the 2600 was revolutionary to the videogaming world in terms of its world dominance and game catalogue, it was also built to last – a gaming equivalent of a Swedish log cabin; early models resembled a mini-Panzerkampwagen with wood panelling in the style of a Station Wagon powerhouse. One website, that shall remain anonymous, also provides tips on how to convert the indestructible joystick into a vibrating sex toy to appease the girlfriend; the quality of build is something that German engineers would have been envious of – "vor sprung durch technique Atari."

In 1972, Bushnell, Ted Dabney and Warner Communications set up shop with Atari Computers and the rest is, as they say, history. Three years later, Atari released *Home Pong* and it was a huge success, thanks to Sear's marketing campaign and Bushnell's genius who was to become the Ray Winstone of the gaming world. Influenced by the Channel F console – the world's first electronic system to use a microchip – Atari followed suit in 1977 with the 2600 VCS that was complimented by nine cartridge games, including *Outlaw*, *Space War* and *Breakout*. The 2600 was to be gaming gold and legend has it, that demand

Origins

The name of "Atari" originates from the one of the world's oldest board games, Go, which Nolan Bushnell was known to enjoy playing and denotes the following: "a group of stones is in Atari if it has only one liberty left." As for the Atari symbol, it was designed by George Opperman in the early 1970s. By all accounts, *Pong* was very popular and the large letter 'A' represented two opposing videogame players with the centre of the Pong court in the middle. Got that? As for classic 2600 games that we still love playing, you really can't go wrong with: *Combat*, *Demon Attack*, *Adventure*, *River Raid*, *Solans*, *Pitfall!*, *Yars Revenge*, *Kaboom*, *Frogger*, *Haunted House* and *H.E.R.O.* Also, the Intellivision was not the only system to feature voice synthesis as the 2600 also had *Quadron*, *Open Sesame* and *Berzerk* – the latter being an enhanced but hacked version. Bless…

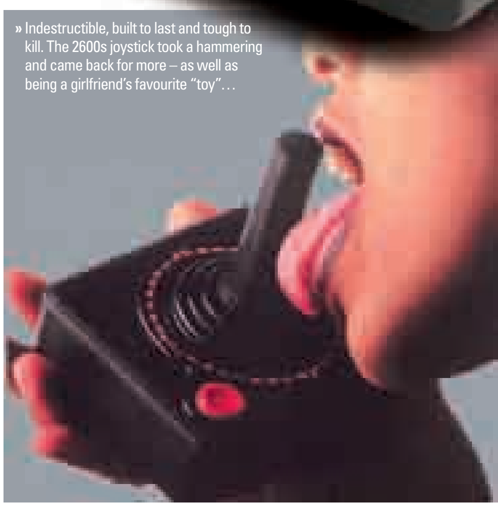


» **This is *Go*. It's loved the world over thanks to its challenging and deep gameplay and is held in particularly high regard in Japan**





» *Grand Prix* was a belter of a driving game and still plays well today; even when compared to visual eyeball candy driving sims on the 360!



» Indestructible, built to last and tough to kill. The 2600s joystick took a hammering and came back for more – as well as being a girlfriend's favourite "toy"…



» The original console of the Atari 2600 released in 1977. With wooden panelling from a Swedish log cabin and immune to damage, it was alleged that the basic design was influenced from German weapon technology from 1945…



» In the early 1980s, the very sight of the 2600 was to be every schoolboy's wet dream and Santa soon had his elves making millions of them.



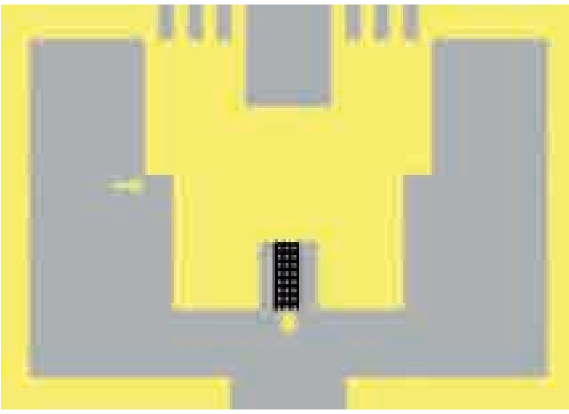
» One of the classic retro 2D action/adventure games: Activision's Pitfall. Quite why brick walls exists in secret underground chambers in a forbidden jungle is anyone's guess…



was so great over the Christmas festivities, that Atari executives helped man the production lines so that the public's hunger for the video sensation were satisfied.

Overnight, the Atari 2600 was raking in millions of dollars and mainstream corporate companies paid close attention to the new form of home entertainment. In 1978, Warner Communications bought Atari and Bushnell left the company in search of other challenges by buying Pizza Time Theatre. A year later, and with more financial backing to boost development of software and marketing, the 2600 was graced with a further twelve games; but stiff competition in the shape of the Magnavox Odyssey 2 and the Mattel Intellivision – the latter being the world's first 16-bit console – threatened Atari's monopoly. The Intellivision was the strongest contender to the Atari by boasting more graphics power, a highly inventive gaming pad (which, some say, has only just been surpassed by Nintendo's Revolution) and innovative peripherals such as a keyboard and voice synthesis module. The Intellivision may have stomped in the clay footprint set by Atari, but in a short period of time, Mattel's machine had shifted over four million units: something had to be done before the 2600 would be superseded by the opposition. The answer came in 1980 with a gaming smash hit from Japan: *Space Invaders*. The arcade conversion to the 2600 proved to be a monstrous success with scores of people buying the console just so they could play the game and more were converted to the Atari cause when *Adventure* was released shortly afterwards. And in gaming history, *Asteroids* and *Lunar Lander* were the first two videogames to be registered in the US copyright office. The face of videogaming was changing rapidly – everyone wanted a piece of the action and things were going to get real ugly.

Four disgruntled Atari employees left the company to form Activision; a third-party outfit to drag from the coattails of the 2600 and release their own games in 1980: *Boxing*, *Checkers*, *Fishing Derby* and *Dragster*. Arguably, Activision's titles were better in quality than the ones that the 2600 had to offer and Atari was not pleased that other parties were taking a slice of the pie and promptly sued. And lost – the giant cash cow that was Atari was forced to resign to the fact that other companies could release their own titles that were compatible with the 2600 and Activision made over seventy million dollars in one year alone. 1981 was to be a gaming duel between the Atari and the Intellivision – in playgrounds across



» Many retro gamers lost hours of their lives and girlfriends to the Atari 2600's *Adventure*: one of the very first RGP games that moulded and influenced the genre.

America, schoolboys would bicker over which system was superior to the other but Atari finally won in a battle of attrition; like the confrontation between VHS and Betamax in the early 1980s, Atari had the edge due to market dominance.

To beat the stranglehold of the 2600 in the marketplace, Coleco believed that a graphically advanced machine would beat the ageing Atari and released the Colecovision in 1982. In response, Atari launched the 5200 – a more powerful machine on terms with Coleco's – and lowered the cost of the 2600 by a hundred bucks. Once again, Atari ruled the roost and its dominance assured as the Colecovision went the same way as the Intellivision and Arcadia released the Supercharger; a device that played games on an audio cassette and allow multi-loads. A slew of third-party companies gave the Atari a vote of confidence and joined the fray as CBS, 20th Century Fox, Tigervision and many more (even x-rated games were available for the more mature gamer via Mystique) so long as Atari were presented with a percentage of the profits. Sales were strong, despite the 2600s age and more games were released such as *Pac-Man* and *ET*, which were critical and commercial disasters. Urban myth states that the movie studio behind *ET* gave Atari less than two months to plan, develop and distribute the 2600 game in time to hit the US theatrical release. Only recently have the software developer and movie studio not been at loggerheads when it comes to film game adaptations, and predictably with such unrealistic delivery deadlines, *ET* was rushed and proved to be an satisfactory videogame: sales were allegedly so low, that a million cartridge units were buried in the Nevada desert.

It was the beginning of the end; there were too many games to meet demand, third-party companies began to fold and the gaming crash was in full swing. Desperate times demand desperate measures, and to compensate for the severe lack of sales, Atari reduced the 2600 to forty dollars in 1984 and had announced the release of the 7800 and a more sophisticated 2600 with better graphics. Which suggested that the end was nigh for videogames, and that the fad had passed, Warner Communications sold its home videogame division of Atari to Jack Tramiel who believed that home computers would replace consoles. Tramiel snuffed out all new Atari releases and put an emphasis on the Commodore 64.

Financial experts predicted that the videogame industry was kaput, the bubble had burst and that the future for home entertainment relied on home computers as a new gaming conflict commenced between the Sinclair Spectrum, Commodore 64, Dragon 32 and others. However, in 1986, Nintendo surprised everyone with the release of the NES console, which was a US sales blitzkrieg – every kid wanted one! Sensing there was more life in the old dog, Atari then sold the newly designed 2600 as the Atari 2600 Jr for less than fifty dollars, as well as the 7800 that had been gathering dust in storage for over a year. Videogames were, once again, the big thing and in 1987 Atari released *Jr Pac-Man* and sub-licensed a number of established games from other companies such as the wonderful *Donkey Kong* – a title that allowed the 2600 to print money. As 1987 had passed, Atari executives realised that the 2600 was coming to the end of its natural shelf life: an astonishing achievement for a gaming machine over ten years old as well as having to compete with more advanced systems. Nolan Bushnell was rehired by Atari who then manufactured a small number of titles including *Secret Quest* as a final swan-song to a console classic and as a way of squeezing the last fistful of cents from the machine. By 1989, the production lines for the 2600 finally ground to a halt as the final units were shipped across the US, although foreign sales and distribution continued for a short period of time. It was time for the 2600 to throw in the towel, retire and look back at what it had achieved through gaming history.

If it wasn't for the 2600 and its influences on the videogame industry, what we take for granted today might have had been very different, especially if Jack Tramiel had his way. The 2600 was a high-quality machine with an incredible range of games to choose from, and all genres were catered for – from educational titles to arcade, puzzle and strategy – it was all available in spades. And the retro gaming rebellion has sparked new life into the 2600 as hobbyists collect and sell the console and cartridges all over the world as well as Jakks Pacific's fabulous TV Games Atari joystick that features a selection of great games such as *Missile Command* and *Scramble* – and how good is that? And besides, with a modern-day game that comes complete with a manual the size of the Yellow Pages and a learning curve that will consume the best part of your life, you really can't go wrong with the Atari's pick up and play.



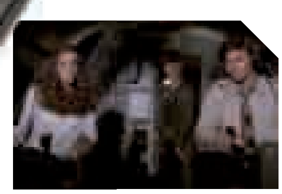
» The Atari 2600 Jr – the company's attempt to flog an ageing machine at a low cost to the masses



Close but no cigar

Sadly, a number of titles for the 2600 never saw the light of day and were to become a retro gaming myth. The classic hardcore skin flick, *Debbie Does Dallas*, was announced in 1982 by American Multiple Systems but was canned before completion; one can only wonder what the gameplay would have been like but it might have been similar to the *Daley Thompson Decathlon* joystick "waggle"… The cult comedy movie *Airplane!* was also canned as was *B-52 Bomber* (which might have been given the opportunity to carpet-bomb Iraq and Afghanistan). One game that definitely deserved to have been released was *Attack of the Baby Seals* – quite possibly a schlock b-movie horror title but one that sounds rather wondrous.

Unsurprisingly, movie tie-ins were popular from *Jaws*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *MASH*, *Magnum PI* and *Porky's* – the latter an amazing u-turn in gameplay where the movie's narrative was altered so that sex-crazed teenagers were changed to that of pigs – nice.



» **We could easily imagine a game based on the hit comedy *Airplane*, but *Debby Does Dallas?* The mind boggles…**

ATARI 2600

PERFECT TEN GAMES

The Atari 2600, or VCS as it was more commonly known has a huge catalogue of games and we've had a real hard time nailing down just ten of our favourites. Before you write in though, any top ten is going to be entirely subjective and of course open to violent debate, and that's what Retro Gamer is all about. Like-minded gamers indulging in sheer nostalgia. Bring it on



01

SPACE INVADERS

» **RELEASED:** 1980
» **PUBLISHED BY:** ATARI
» **CREATED BY:** RICK MAURERER
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** MAZE CRAZE

01 Don't be fooled by the ancient-looking visuals, Space Invaders was one of the earliest 'killer apps' and proved a massive hit when it was first released.

It may not be arcade perfect (there were only 36 onscreen invaders compared to the arcade's 55), but *Space Invaders* had plenty of different options, 112 in fact, which was a staggering amount at the time and greatly enhanced what was already a great game. Moving shields, zig-zagging bombs, invisible invaders, two players onscreen at once, guided missiles; the list was virtually endless. If you don't have a copy of *Space Invaders* in your collection then you're doing your VCS a huge disservice.

RIVER RAID

» **RELEASED:** 1982
» **PUBLISHED BY:** ACTIVISION
» **CREATED BY:** CAROL SHAW
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** 3D TIC-TAC-TOE, CHECKERS, POLO

02 River Raid was a huge departure for Carol Shaw; especially when you consider that the majority of her previous VCS games had been based on simple parlour games.

The never-ending river you flew up was filled with a variety of dangerous hazards and the further you made it up the river, the more dangerous the challenge became (we didn't mind though, it looked amazing). Not only were you up against dangerous opponents, you also had a limited amount of fuel to worry about, which became scarcer and scarcer and the game progressed. A classic shooter no collector should be without.



02

BERSERK

» **RELEASED:** 1982
» **PUBLISHED BY:** ATARI
» **CREATED BY:** DAN HITCHINS
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** SWORDQUEST: EARTHWORLD

03 Like many 2600 arcade conversions, Berzerk wasn't perfect. For starters, the voice synthesis from the arcade game was nowhere to be seen (although this was later added in an enhanced version), the graphics gave the game a more claustrophobic feel than its arcade parent and the enemies couldn't fire diagonally, thus making it easier to play. Despite these niggles it remains a great conversion mainly because of its simplistic gameplay and solid controls. Negotiating the mazes took steady nerves and a fair amount of patience and strategy. If you're a fan of shooters, track this down as quickly as possible.

ADVENTURE

» **RELEASED:** 1980
» **PUBLISHED BY:** ATARI
» **CREATED BY:** WARREN ROBINETT
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** MAZE, SLOT RACER

04 Adventure is perhaps one of the crudest-looking games on the 2600. Your lead character was nothing more than a simple block, many of the rooms were sparse even by VCS standards and the less said about the dragons the better…

Nevertheless, it was one of the most involving titles available for Atari's first console. With a simple premise (return a stolen chalice to a castle) and some great gameplay mechanics – several items can be picked up along the way to help your progress – *Adventure* remains a landmark title and an essential addition to your VCS library.

MS PAC-MAN

» **RELEASED:** 1982
» **PUBLISHED BY:** ATARI
» **CREATED BY:** MIKE HOROWITZ, JOSH LITTLEFIELD
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** NA

05 Even the most avid 2600 owner will tell you that Atari's original Pac-Man was an appalling conversion. The game had obviously been rushed and disgruntled gamers poured scorn upon Atari. Atari had obviously been listening, though, as *Ms Pac-Man* was a huge improvement. While the visuals weren't arcade perfect, they captured the spirit of the original, and, this time around the main character actually looked like her arcade counterpart. Add in spot-on controls, faithful sound effects and near perfect gameplay that perfectly mimicked the arcade game and *Ms Pac-Man* success was assured.



03

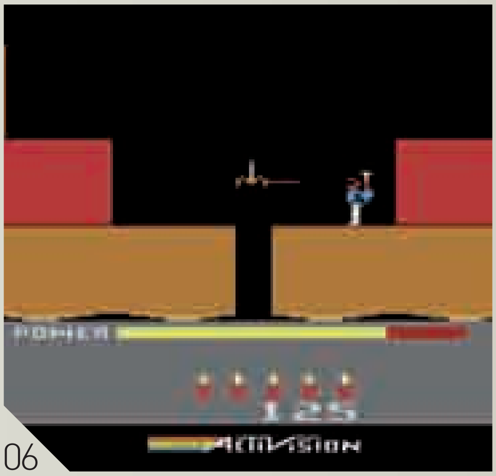


04



05





06



07



08

H.E.R.O.

» **RELEASED:** 1984
» **PUBLISHED BY:** ACTIVISION
» **CREATED BY:** JOHN VAN RYZIN
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** F-18 HORNET, COSMIC COMMUTER

06 **Activision certainly churned out some quality titles for the Atari 2600 and H.E.R.O. was no exception.** Taking control of Roderick Hero, the aim was to use your propeller backpack to venture into the 20 dangerous mines and rescue all the miners. *H.E.R.O.* was typical of many Activision titles in that it was very polished and featured some solid gameplay. While there was no actual music to speak of, there's a wealth of impressive effects that really added to the game's atmosphere and the ever-decreasing power in Roderick's jetpack ensured that every game remained a tense challenge. Great stuff.

DEFENDER II

» **RELEASED:** 1982
» **PUBLISHED BY:** ATARI
» **CREATED BY:** BILL ASPROMONTE
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** MILLIPEDE, PENGO

07 **Defender II (or Stargate as it is also known) is another great arcade conversion for the 2600 and a damn fine shooter to boot.** Unlike the original *Defender* (which was a pretty poor conversion) its sequel got everything correct and featured visuals that were extremely reminiscent of the arcade hit. The action was fast and furious, sprite flickering was kept to a bare minimum and there were plenty of meaty sound effects to enjoy. Add in the fact that none of the original controls were sacrificed and you have yet another cracking title that certainly deserves a special place in your collection.

PITAFALL! II: LOST CAVERNS

» **RELEASED:** 1984
» **PUBLISHED BY:** ACTIVISION
» **CREATED BY:** DAVID CRANE
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** CANYON BOMBER, GHOSTBUSTERS

08 **While the original Pitfall! is still a fantastic game, we constantly find ourselves returning to its superior sequel whenever we fancy participating in some jungle antics.** Thanks to the cartridge containing its own chipset, the visuals in *Pitfall! II* were very advanced for their time and were complemented by an extremely impressive soundtrack – indeed, technically *Pitfall! II* remains one of the best-looking and sounding games that we've ever played on Atari's console. If you're looking for a tense platformer *Pitfall! II* should be tracked down at all costs.



09

ICE HOCKEY

» **RELEASED:** 1981
» **PUBLISHED BY:** ACTIVISION
» **CREATED BY:** ALAN MILLER
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** BASKETBALL, CHASE, ROBOT TANK

09 **There were plenty of sports titles available on the Atari VCS, but few came close to the greatness of Alan Miller's excellent Ice Hockey.** It's only two-on-two, and the graphics were rather simplistic to say the least, but none of that matters in the slightest as the all-important gameplay more than delivered. You had a surprising amount of control over both your players, the action was fast and furious and, once you got the hang of it, you could pull off shots from a variety of different angles. It was even possible to check opponents and send them crashing to the floor if you couldn't regain control of the puck. Another great title from Activision that needs to be owned.

THRUST

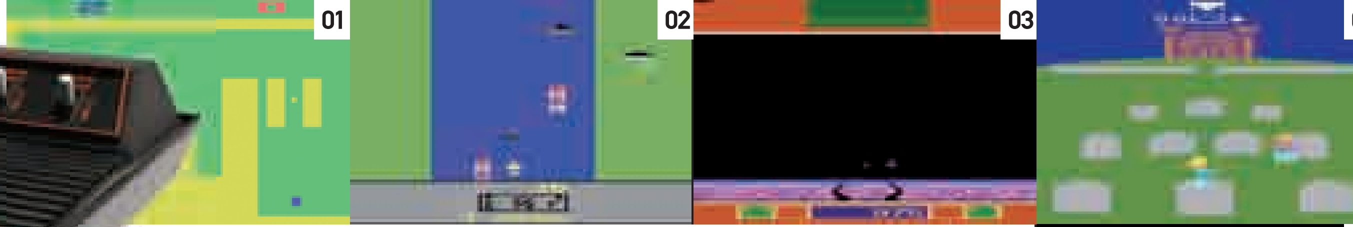
» **RELEASED:** 2000
» **PUBLISHED BY:** XTYPE
» **CREATED BY:** THOMAS JENTZSCH
» **BY THE SAME DEVELOPER:** JAMMED, STAR FIRE, SWOOPS!

10 **There's an amazing array of home-brew titles currently available for the 2600, but Thomas Jentzsch's Thrust remains one of our favourites and shows off just what Atari's console can be capable of in the right hands.** It was a great conversion of the original Commodore 64 classic and featured some very impressive visuals and a real sense of inertia that made it a joy to play. There was some fantastically smooth scrolling on display and the controls themselves were superb, meaning that you'd never blame them when you inevitably crashed into the desolate landscape. Don't turn your nose up at its home-brew status, *Thrust* was a superb title for the 2600 and deserves to be played.



10

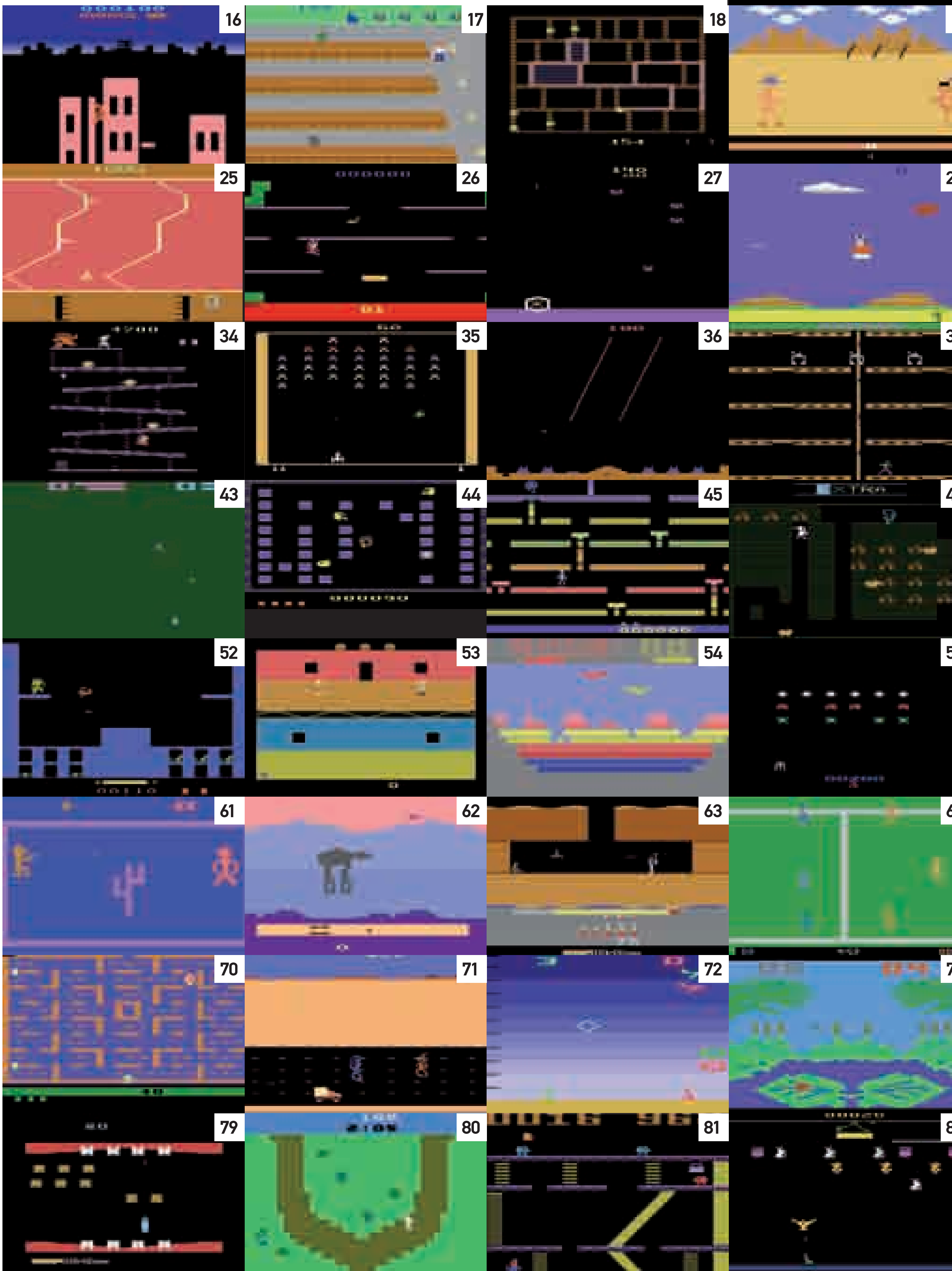




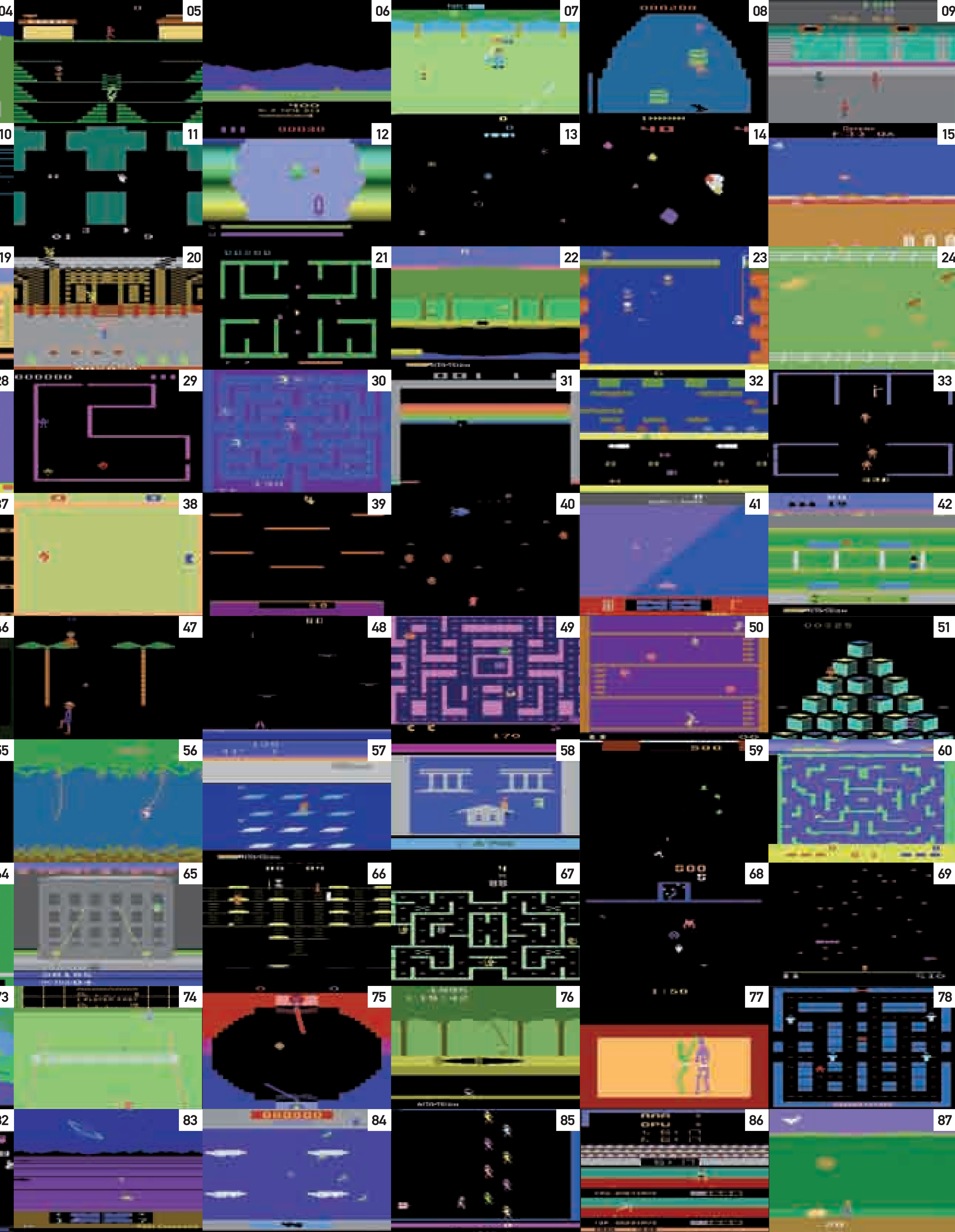
ATARI 2600 and the rest…

Considering the massive popularity of Atari's first home console, it's perhaps unsurprising that it features such a diverse range of great (and downright awful) games. Here's just a selection of them…





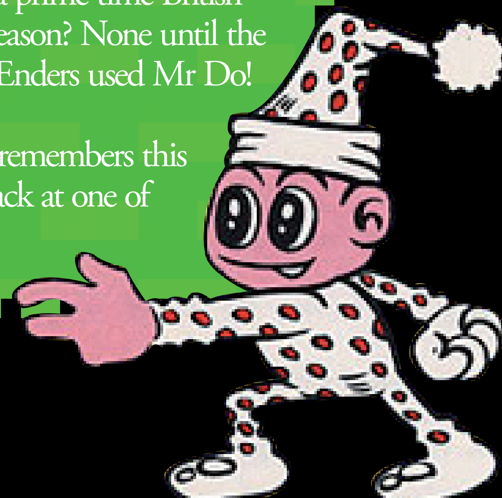
01 MINIATURE GOLF
02 RIVER RAID
03 EARTH DIES SCREAMING
04 GHOST MANOR
05 POPEYE
06 MOON PATROL
07 TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
08 ZAXXON
09 DOUBLE DRAGON
10 BEAMRIDER
11 HAUNTED HOUSE
12 RIVER PATROL
13 GRAVITAR
14 ASTEROIDS
15 MEGA FORCE
16 RAMPAGE
17 TAPPER
18 AMIDAR
19 CUSTER'S REVENGE
20 GREMLINS
21 MARAUDER
22 PITFALL II: LOST CAVERNS
23 POOYAN
24 STAMPEDE
25 FANTASTIC VOYAGE
26 MARIO BROS
27 PHOENIX
28 SNOOPY AND THE RED BARON
29 VENTURE
30 ALIEN
31 BREAKOUT
32 FROGGER
33 BERZERK
34 DONKEY KONG
35 GALAXIAN
36 MISSILE COMMAND
37 ADVENTURES OF TRON
38 COMBAT
39 JOUST
40 PIGS IN SPACE
41 RADAR LOCK
42 KEYSTONE KAPERS
43 SPACE WAR
44 PENGO
45 INFILTRATE
46 MR. DO!
47 COCONUTS
48 DEMON ATTACK
49 MS. PAC-MAN
50 KANGAROO
51 Q*BERT
52 SKY SKIPPER
53 HALLOWEEN
54 CANYON BOMBER
55 GORF
56 JUNGLE HUNT
57 FROSTBITE
58 ET: THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL
59 GYRUSS
60 SHARK ATTACK
61 OUTLAW
62 STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
63 H.E.R.O.
64 REALSPORTS SOCCER
65 GHOSTBUSTERS
66 BURGER TIME
67 MOUSE TRAP
68 SINISTAR
69 CENTIPEDE
70 PAC-MAN
71 ROAD RUNNER
72 AIR SEA BATTLE
73 FROGS AND FLIES
74 REALSPORTS TENNIS
75 STAR WARS: JEDI ARENA
76 PITFALL
77 KARATE
78 LOCK 'N' CHASE
79 PLAQUE ATTACK
80 CHUCK NORRIS SUPERKICKS
81 MINER 2049ER
82 CARNIVAL
83 SOLARIS
84 TIME PILOT
85 BACHELOR PARTY
86 TRACK AND FIELD
87 FOREST

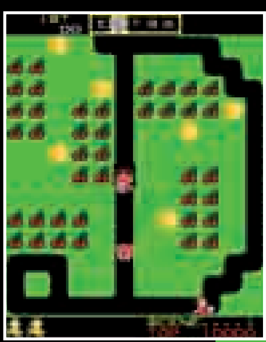

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THE CLASSIC GAME

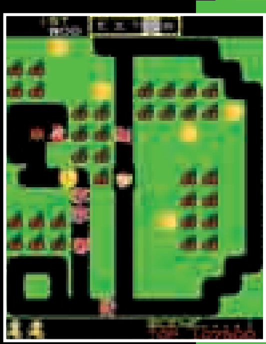
MR DO!

How many videogames are used as a metaphor in a prime time British soap opera at peak viewing time during the holiday season? None until the 30 December 2005, when Dennis Rickman of EastEnders used Mr Do! as a metaphor for his life.
Taking his prompt from Dennis, who so obviously remembers this forgotten classic, Mike Tooley takes a fond look back at one of gaming's forgotten heroes. The lovable Mr Do!





» The first screen, the tunnels make the word DO



» An early videogame *Easter Egg* – only seasoned gamers could make Roses

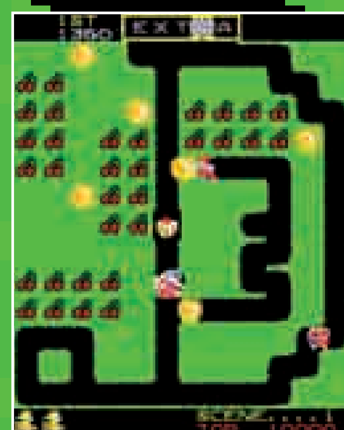
The singing and posturing of the lavish prince had stopped, now the infuriating lyrics of Goody Two Shoes looped from the mouths of babes. It's a time resplendent in revolution: Dr Rubik's cube passes into history, usurped by a plastic snake, a movie about an archaeologist is the cinema's film of choice. Not for the last time in its history the arcade scene is struggling, with machines standing idle. Unlike the future struggles of the arcade industry, however, the actual players are still there. The arcade is still the social place of choice for pre and early teens. Fickle at best, this generation is becoming tired of the games on offer. The industry is acutely aware of this and a slew of new titles hit the arcades mid '82 and for the first time since the peak of the videogame boom there is a choice. For every *Scramble* there is a *Space Panic*, for every *Tron* a *Popeye* and central to all that is new and shiny stands a clown, resplendent in red, carrying a power ball. He doesn't fit around here, and as the new kid in town so inadvertently does, he draws a small crowd. "Mr Do!" Exclaim the kids, definitely not a local name….

So it was that in 1982 Universal released *Mr Do!* to the arcade going public. It was to be its most commercially successful game of all 40 of its arcade releases and was one of that year's biggest-selling machines, no mean feat when your stable mates included *Space Panic* (the first platform game) *Jumping Jack* and the totally forgotten *Devil Zone*.

Mr Do! wasn't an action game or a puzzle game as so many have labelled it since. In truth *Mr Do!* qualifies with a few others to sit as a true genre miscreant. Maze game, shoot-'em-up, puzzle and strategy would all describe aspects of the game play, but there isn't a genre that encapsulates it all. Classic definitely, but there was so much more to it than other games that received a similar status. For many gamers, *Mr Do!* presented them with the true zenith of gaming way back in '82, and for some, the experience still hasn't been bettered.

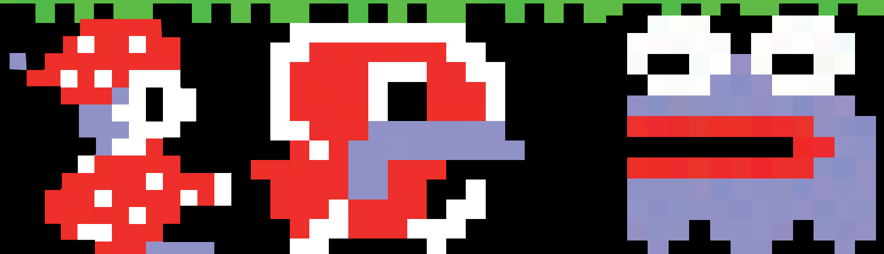
The attract mode offered few clues to *Mr Do!'s* gameplay mechanics, sure it showed Mr Do! walking around, digging and firing his power ball, dropping apples on foes and shooting letter monsters. But the attract mode was nothing more than a teaser; it outlined the concept that lay beyond, but out of context, just as it managed to hide the deliciously mischievous level design.

Unlike most games of the time it provided



» A very basic trap, this is the lifeblood of the game

"FOR MANY GAMERS, MR DO! PRESENTED THEM WITH THE TRUE ZENITH OF GAMING WAY BACK IN '82, AND FOR SOME, THE EXPERIENCE STILL HASN'T BEEN BETTERED"



» Mr Do! featured a variety of ways to clear each stage. Which did you use?



gamers with a set of variables with which to experiment, the game world existed but there was no one predetermined path or goal. There were two basic ways to finish each scene: destroy all the meanies or harvest the cherries. Although *Mr Do!* always arrived armed with a power ball it was never enough to destroy all the bad guys, as it had a recharge penalty; the more you used it the longer it took to recharge, in some respects the closer you came to nearing the end of a scene the further you were from it as you waited and waited for the ball to return to you.

Fortunately for would-be clowns and cherry farmers alike there was more at your disposal than just a bouncing power ball; namely apples. The fruit lay throughout every scene, randomly placed through the candy and formed the weapon of choice for our polka-dotted hero. A well-placed apple set over a tunnel could despatch multiple enemies as it dropped to the floor below.

Each scene would start with a candy field broken by a tunnel running through it. In the first scene the tunnel carves out the shape 'Do', thereafter the numbers two through to nine would present the tunnel shapes up to level ten, and then the game looped back to 'Do' and so on. Scattered throughout each scene were the apples and cherry patches.

Mr Do! always started bottom centre of each scene, while the meanies spawned dead centre. This gave the player a few seconds to take in the surroundings and formulate a strategy before the meanies had actually spawned.

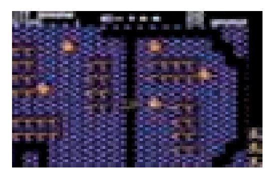
And that is where *Mr Do!* alienates as many as it endears.

You see, you had to have a plan. And the first time you play any game you don't have one. Mr Do! couldn't run all the time, everything that spawned onto the screen chased him, the creatures didn't mill about aimlessly they hunted the cute little clown down, and they were faster too. The candy fields provided some respite from the pace of the tunnels but only if Mr Do! had a good head start and time enough to get underneath and behind an apple. If the player got that far the balance of power would shift, safe in the short term players could go about setting traps for the pursuing meanies, as the last meanie spawned you could see for sure how many more Mr Do! needed to despatch, and then the planning started again.

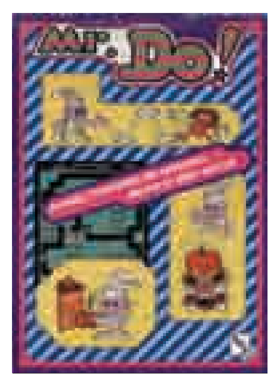
As the last baddie leaves the spawn point a treat appears. Not only did it provide the player with bonus points, it also froze all the onscreen meanies – though they were still deadly to touch. Upon taking the treat, a letter monster was released from the top of the screen with three henchmen. Able only to traverse the tunnels already carved out, this gang of four moved at twice the pace of Mr Do! and devoured any apples in their path, often nullifying traps along the way. After dispatching the letter, the game would return to normal albeit at a more frantic pace. And thus the finally orchestrated dance would continue…

As players grow familiar with the concept ever more lavish strategies emerge. The point scorers double their scores by killing only with apples, the runners would just harvest cherries, while the distance players would challenge their ability by clearing as many scenes as they possibly could. The distance players as it turned out were the players who truly mastered *Mr Do!* using an amalgamation of all the above known strategies to plunder further and further into the game. The letter monster appeared every 5000 points without his

IN THE KNOW

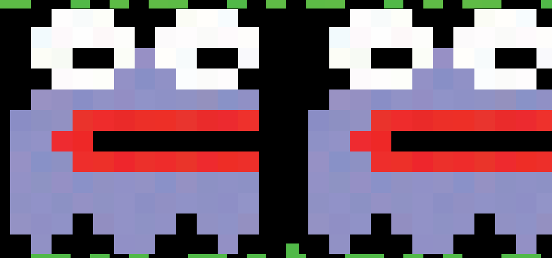


- **PUBLISHER:** UNIVERSAL
- **DEVELOPER:** UNIVERSAL
- **RELEASED:** 1982
- **GENRE:** MISCELLANEOUS
- **EXPECT TO PAY:** £500+ FOR AN ORIGINAL CABINET



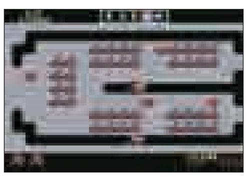
THE CLASSIC GAME

MR DO!

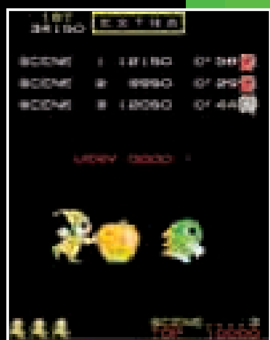


WHICH DO ARE YOU?

All major home formats have received a version of *Mr Do!* however most struggled to accurately convey the arcade games immediacy. The Commodore 64 had a fine version, perfect in everyway except one. The playfield was delivered landscape not portrait giving the player far too much room and making the game far too easy as a result. The BBC B had one of the best version in the cleverly titled *Mr Ee!* It was almost an exact port, only the name was changed, it looked and played exactly as the arcade machine, although the powerball recharge and bounce was wrong. Not until 1994 did the definitive home version arrive, on the Japanese only Sharp X68000



» Designers couldn't maintain the arcades playfields on early hardware, despite the games being competent; they lacked the key elements that made the arcade game so great.



» Gamers were divided, was it a goading message or a compliment?

henchmen, each time the player destroyed a letter monster they were awarded that letter, until you eventually spelled out the word extra resulting in an additional life to play with. Accomplished players could time the 5000 point cycle and score so highly that they would receive a bonus life every couple of screens certainly for the first twenty or so levels.

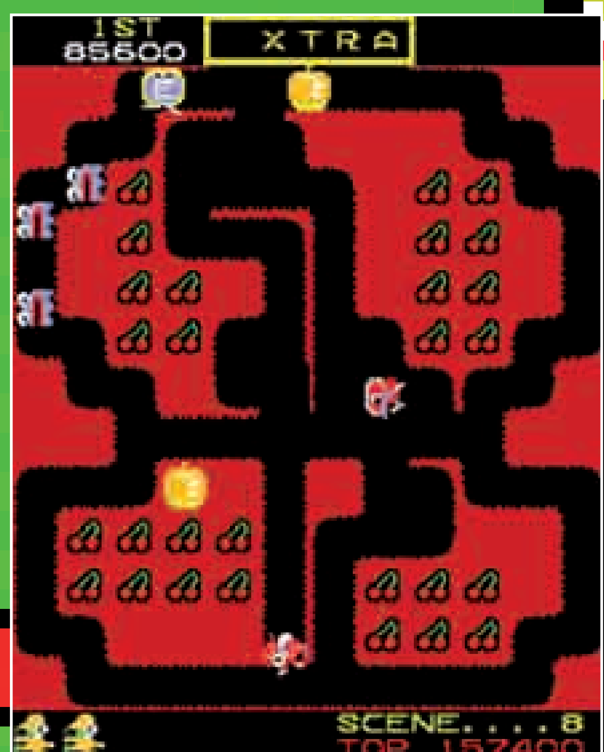
After clearing every third scene the player was rewarded with a simple cut-scene, a 'very good' message and a status report. Quick maths was applied to the status screen to work out how the game is going, has the player achieved enough extra lives to further the experience? Was there a need to amend the current strategy to add longevity? And so it went on, the player providing the critique for his own performance. The cut-scenes were much discussed at the time not only because we hadn't seen them before but because no one really understood the 'very good' message, so early in the game many believed it to be a goading message "very good, now try this". Whatever the real meaning for those that played and enjoyed *Mr Do!* there really was nothing else quite like it.

For those players with the temerity and reflexes to reach level 00 (100) another surprise lay in store, played out on the zero map the meanies spawned incredibly fast and then proceeded to run away from Mr Do!. In most games this would make things easy, in *Mr Do!* it serves to unravel the winning formula that the player has used to progress so far, and the whole scene descends into a frantic run 'n' gun affair, usually resulting in many lost lives. Once scene 00 was completed the game would loop back to 01 with more meanies and more pace than ever before.

The graphics, vibrant and crisp, relayed the action perfectly, well-defined sprites and impeccable animation shot a warning shot across the bows of the games that relied on star fields for backdrops. The music too, a short loop of The Can Can jollies along changing pace with the games tempo, becoming frantic as the situation looks hopeless and giving way to its usual tempo as the player regains control of the situation. Raised slightly above the background music are some of the most

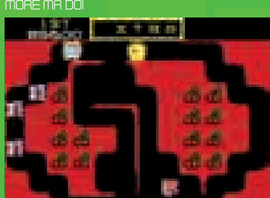


» Cut scenes in the early eighties. Extra men were vital for success in *Mr Do!*



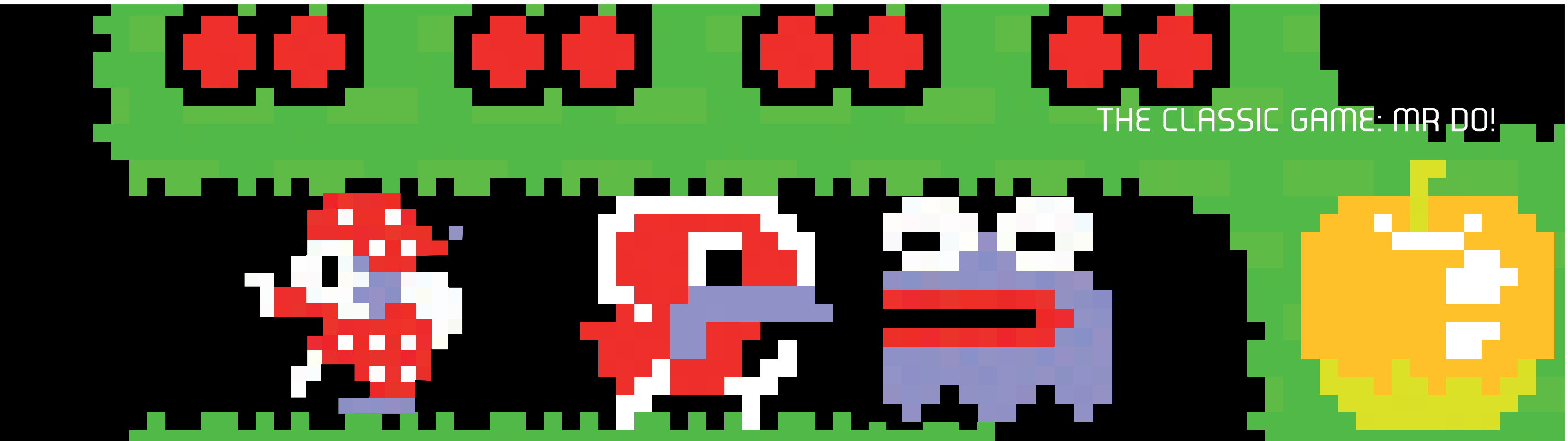
» The alpha monster and henchmen. The scene turns red and the beasties freeze

MORE MR DO!



OTHER GAMES IN THE SERIES:

Do! Run Run 1984 Universal Arcade
Mr Do's Castle 1983 Universal Arcade converted to most home formats
Mr Do's Wild Ride 1984 Universal Arcade
Mr Do's Adventure 1985 Universal (never released)
Neo Mr Do! Visco Games Arcade Neo Geo



musical sound effects ever used in a video game. Clearing a cherry patch built a tune with a chime for sequence completion; the power ball's return was accompanied by a wholesome whooshing sound as it recharged, while the effect was reversed as it exploded into a foe. Apples dropped with cartoon-like falling sounds and even the main protagonists' death animation had comedy sound effects. At times it was impossible to keep your eye on the whole screen, but the sound effects let the player know what was happening around them.

As tough as the game ever got Mr Do!'s fate was always with the player. Death always came from a mistake that the player had made. Delightfully difficult, *Mr Do!'s* biggest failing is its greatest asset, the fact that it isn't instantly accessible to all. It remains a treasure trove of videogame genius that had been crafted and left for a lucky few to discover.



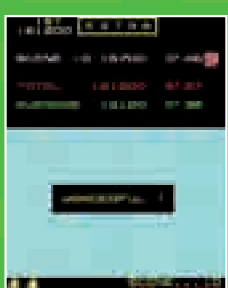
Some 22 years after I first met the little red clown, I'm still as enamoured with him, as I ever was, *Mr Do!* wasn't made, he was crafted. The only gripe I've ever had with him is still there, the cabinets that housed him didn't save high scores, so you would leave an arcade with the top score of millions only to find it replaced the following day by a score of ten thousand points. Then again, maybe that was part of the challenge…

"THE ATTRACT MODE WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A TEASER; IT OUTLINED THE CONCEPT THAT LAY BEYOND, BUT OUT OF CONTEXT, JUST AS IT MANAGED TO HIDE THE DELICIOUSLY MISCHIEVOUS LEVEL DESIGN"

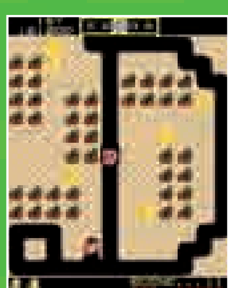
LICENCE TO THRILL...

So successful was *Mr Do!* for Universal that the company's subsequent releases were redesigned to include the clown. A cursory glance at its post *Mr Do!* release schedule shows only four games that did not feature the clown released before its subsequent demise in '85. Although none of these games were true sequels they took on a classic status of their own and in truth each game would have been successful without the polka-dotted hero. By mid '84 Universal shifted its focus to technology and laser disc games in particular, the costs were to be offset by the release of *Mr Do's Adventure.* Unfortunately, the mid-eighties game crash came and took Universal with it, and *Mr Do!s Adventure* was never released. Some of Universals IP was sold to Taito and the rest went to Takkara. As IP ownership changed more opportunities prevailed and THQ released *Mr Do!* on the SNES in 1996 some 14 years after its release. The following year saw a Visco remake of *Mr Do!* for Neo Geo moderately popular the gameplay shifted to an isometric view, but despite the early play mechanics remaining the charm of the original was gone.

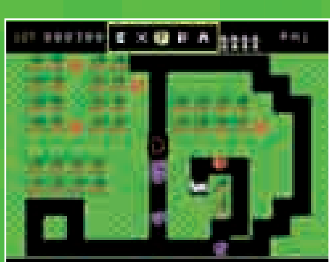




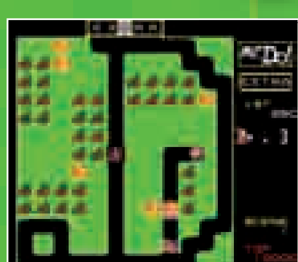
» Not seen by many. Notice how it gives you an average score and time



» Every ten scenes the game loops, the apples relocate and the new colours keep it fresh



» The MSX home version played well and is extremely faitful to the arcade original, unlike the 2600 version



» While the Sharp version is considered to be superior, the SNES version is easier to source



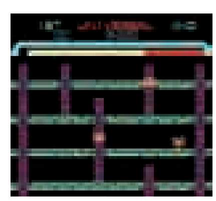
» The closest home version pre snes. The BBc's *Mr Ee!* And the very Rare Gameboy *Mr Do!* plays wonderfully, but is best viewed as a re-imagining

DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

SPACE PANIC
(1980, VARIOUS 8-BIT MACHINES)

TOP GEAR
(1984, ARCADE LASER DISC)

SUPER DON QUIXOTE
(1984, ARCADE LASER DISC)



JACK THE NIPPER

BEING A LITTLE SOD HAS NEVER BEEN SO MUCH FUN



- » **PUBLISHER** GREMLIN
- » **RELEASED:** 1986
- » **GENRE:** MISCELLANEOUS
- » **FEATURED HARDWARE:** AMSTRAD
- » **EXPECT TO PAY:** £1+



HISTORY

While I'm more than happy to play games that involve you rescuing maidens, solving difficult puzzles and generally saving the world, sometimes I just want to be a little shit and create as much destruction as possible. It's unsurprising then that *Jack The Nipper* received plenty of screen time when I was but a wee nipper myself (alright… surly teenager…).

Sure it was the sort of game that would have the Daily Mail in an outrage if it was released today (now there's an idea), but hell it was a lot of fun.

Starting off in the little tyke's bedroom, I'd immediately go after Jack's peashooter, located high on a shelf above him. Once armed, it was time to go out into Jack's neighbourhood and cause as much mayhem as possible and that's where *Jack The Nipper* really came alive.

I love experimenting in games, and while Jack's antics weren't exactly taxing and they did cause you to think, if only to work out how to get the most out of each item you found. Creating mischief caused your naughtyometer to rise, and while simply dropping an item would cause it to raise a little, a bit of experimentation soon saw the bar rapidly increasing in length. Don't drop that pot of glue on the floor, take it to Gummo's Chomping Molars and use it to clamp all the teeth. Want to cause a blackout in the computer shop? Then use the battery to drain all the power.

Of course, all this unbridled naughtiness wasn't without its consequences… Several characters patrolled each screen, and coming into contact with them caused your nappy rash to rise – once it reached a certain level you'd lose a life. While many were easy to dodge, causing acts of destruction, or hitting them with a random shot from your peashooter immediately made them home in on you.

Despite this danger, I'd still shoot as many characters as possible. Maybe I liked the thrill of the chase, or, more likely, I was just a little sod…




PING MOLARS
GLEEM
THE NIPPER!........
RASH
POCKET
YOMETER
1
2
60
80
100

In the chair with...

NOLAN BUSHNELL





HE IS THE FATHER OF ELECTRONIC GAMING, THE FOUNDER OF ATARI, THE CREATOR OF PONG. AND, DESPITE A LIFETIME ASSOCIATION WITH VIDEOGAMING, NOLAN BUSHNELL'S PASSION FOR GAMES IS AS STRONG AS EVER. DAVID CROOKES TALKS TO THE MAN WHO TOOK GAMING TO THE MASSES - AND DISCOVERS WHY HE BELIEVES SOME MODERN GAMES ARE DEGRADING....

"My vision for Atari was a company which brought technology and consumer electronics to everyday Joe and Moe," says a proud Nolan Bushnell, casting his mind back 34 years to 1972.

Back then, Nolan was aged 29 and living in Silicon Valley where he and business colleague Ted Daubney had formed Atari with just $250 dollars each.

Yet from those humble beginning grew a company which dominated the early days of videogaming – and much of that was to do with Nolan's determination to succeed.

Bushnell was born in 1943 in Clearfield, Utah. Brought up as a Mormon, he has been married twice: first to Paula Nielson and secondly to current wife Nancy Nini. He has three daughters, Alissa, Britta and Neela, and five sons, Brent, Tyler, Gavin, Dylan and Wyatt. Sadly, his father died when Nolan was 15, leaving him as the man of the house, looking out for his mother and three sisters.

His interest in electronics was sparked by a teacher called Mrs Cook who taught him electricity in the third grade. Nolan became interested in playing with science, hooking up bulbs and batteries and creating new electronic devices.

And as he went through life, he learned from many people around him: a ham radio operator who lived nearby taught him electronics and radio; a boss at the Lagoon Amusement Park in Salt Lake City, in which he worked part-time from the age of 19, gave him lessons in business; and a university lecturer at the University of Utah gave him a grounding in computer graphics.

But then his interest was grabbed by a basic space combat game called *Spacewar* – and it would prove to be the catalyst for what would later become a multi-billion pound videogame industry.

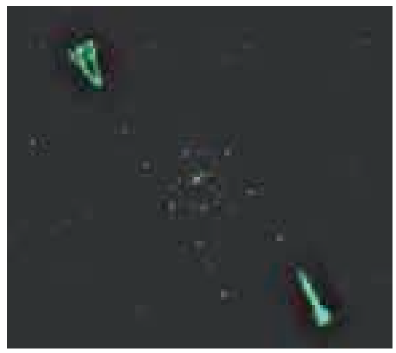
Nolan had already spent a few years during the late 1960s sneaking into the computer labs at the University of Utah to play *Spacewar*, which had been created by Steve Russell on $7 million mainframe PDP-1 computers at the Massachussets Institute for Technology in 1962.

The influence is not lost of Bushell, who juggled going to university with working at the amusement park.

"The real credit for kickstarting the videogaming industry has to lie with Steve Russell," he explains. "He was my inspiration. I thought *Spacewar* was fascinating – it was fresh and nobody had created anything like it before. From the moment I played it, I wanted to write my own programmes – the potential for videogaming was there."

Yet after leaving university in 1968, he was faced with two choices, neither of which involved videogames. He could take up a well-paid job as the amusement park manager or become an engineer with a company called Ampex, the company which invented videotape. He decided to chose the latter.

But that vision of *Spacewar* remained strong and in 1971, Nolan created his



» *Star Wars* did it for movie sci-fi and *Space War* did it for videogames. Start a whole new and exciting era, that is





» **Left:** For such a basic game, it was fitting that the casing would be basic too, the word *Pong* being the only eye-catching feature. **Above:** Beautiful, slim and stunning - and that's just the coin-op machine: Computer Space was Bushnell's first attempt at an arcade game

GAMING GOD IN BRIEF...

Nolan Bushnell's jaw drops when he plays Steve Russell's *Spacewar*, a space combat game from the 1960s. So he writes his own version, Computer Space, releasing it as a coin-op - but it fails. He turns his attention to simpler games and puts an idea for a bat and ball title to engineer Al Acorn - and the classic *Pong* was born. It's released by Bushnell and Tom Daubney's new firm, Atari, and is widely credited as laying the foundations for today's videogame industry.



» Not just a game, *Pong* was a video skill game as this flyer claims, reinforcing the yellow feel of the cabinet. Ace

own version called *Computer Space* on a cheaper, less advanced machine. "*Computer Space* was more complex than *Spacewar*," continues Bushnell. "As an engineer and technologist I wanted to create something impressive. It was as much about the techniques of the game as the game itself, but it had to be fun to play. You see, from a technology perspective, everything was very hard to do in the early years and, from *Computer Space* onwards, I had to develop games that could be done with the limits of the technology at the time."

Whereas *Spacewar* had been created to show off the power and capabilities of the PDP-1, Nolan wanted *Computer Space* to be a commercial product.

Daubney was interested and the pair joined up, selling the concept to coin-op machine manufacturer Nutting Associates in 1971. A total of 1,500 *Computer Space* cabinets were made in a failed venture that netted Bushnell and Daubney just $500.

Yet the pair were undeterred and sunk the cash into a new venture. Nolan wanted to call the new firm Syzygy but the name was already taken - instead they decided to call their company the Japanese-sounding Atari.

"I wanted to created a technologically advanced company, one which would push boundaries," Bushnell said. "There's no question that we did this. We had a great crew and very, very smart people working for us and we were innovating all the time. One of my philosophies was to create a place where people enjoyed working. We were all interested in creating games and we liked to play what we were creating and that, I think, marked us out and made us successful. And remember, I didn't invent videogames. They had already been created – that's how I became interested in them. I just made them commercial."

Nolan created a casual work environment which threw out the rule book – there were no car parking spaces for directors and jeans were allowed in the office.

And then he employed engineer Al Acorn who had worked with Bushnell at Ampex. His first task was to create a simple ping-pong game based on a version that had been released for the Magnavox Odyssey console.

Al went to work, having been told by Bushnell that it would be released by General Electric and that other business deals were in place to ensure it would be manufactured.

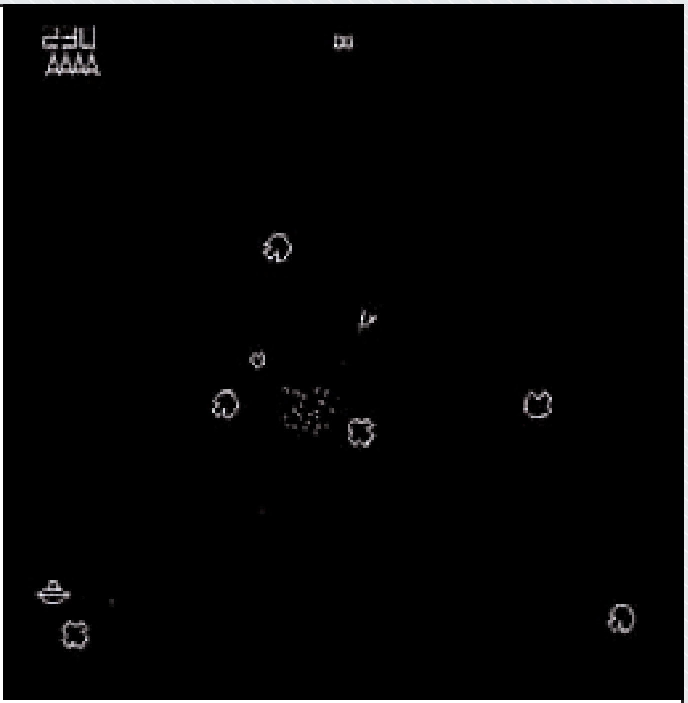
These claims were false. Nolan actually wanted to see how Al would perform as he had very little knowledge of videogames.

Bushnell says: "When I devised what became *Pong* and put it to Al Alcorn, it was meant to be a training project. It was only supposed to be a throwaway game because we actually wanted to create a driving game at the time. I chose tennis because of it's simplicity, yet when people say I created *Pong*, they're missing something – Al brought a lot to the project and he made it what it was. He deserves a lot of credit for the game."

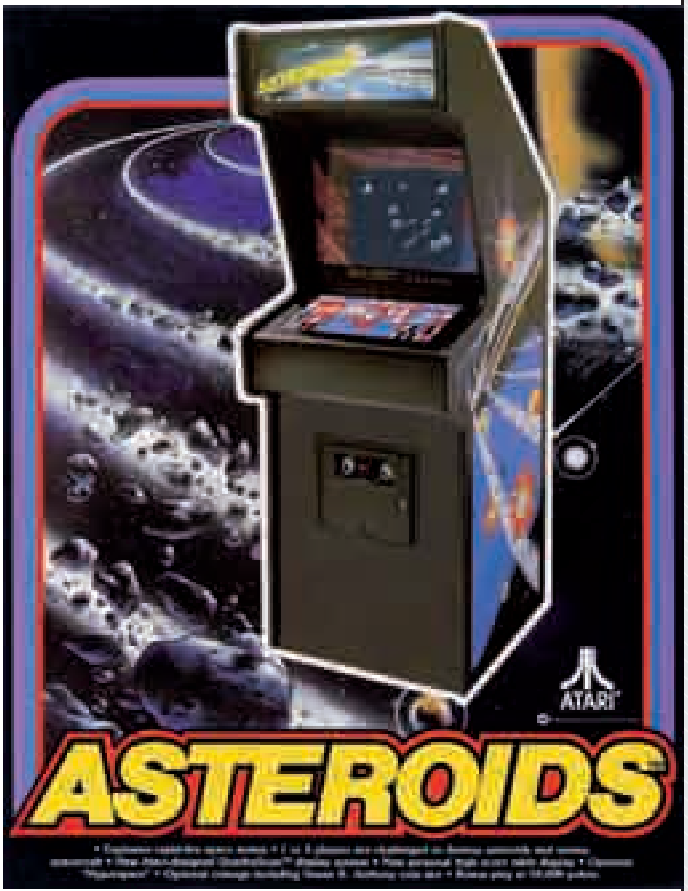
Despite its simplicity, *Pong* was addictive.

"I DIDN'T INVENT VIDEOGAMES. THEY HAD ALREADY BEEN CREATED – THAT'S HOW I BECAME INTERESTED IN THEM. I JUST MADE THEM COMMERCIAL"

NOLAN BUSHNELL

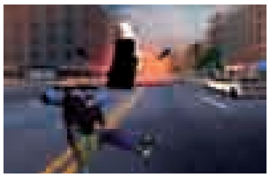


» Spawning many a rip-off, Nolan envisaged *Asteroids* as a simple *Breakout*-style game where the aim was to clear the screen of rubble



» Looking space-age and sophisticated, this is how Atari advertised its latest smash-hit game

THIS IS A GAME?



Gaming has changed beyond recognition over the past 30 years. It's therefore difficult to make a direct comparison between Atari's *Pong* and Sega's *Virtua Tennis*, other than the basic gameplay of hitting a ball back and forth. But Nolan believes gaming has altered not just in the graphical presentation of titles, but in the way they target audiences, particularly as he believes 40 per cent of the people who played *Pong* were women.

"That's changed now," he adds. "Unfortunately, the social and female gamer have been left out, by focusing too much on violence or sports. Games are also too complex which leaves out the casual gamer. I believe there is a huge market opportunity in targeting the casual, social or female gamer."

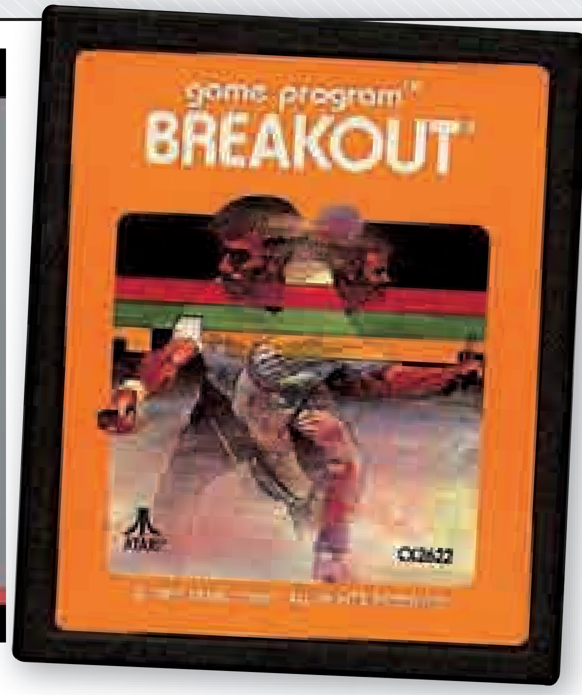
Yet Bushnell reckons Sony and Microsoft have been good for gaming from a technology perspective. "Technology is moving toward photo realism and the steps taken have been very impressive. The network effort for Xbox Live is very important for the future of games."

But he objects strongly to games such as *Grand Theft Auto* which recently caused a stir for its sex scenes. "Controversy is a very powerful marketing tool," he says. "A year or so ago, WIRED asked me to present Videogame Of The Year to the makers of *GTA*.

"I declined because I don't believe that the degrading nature of the game deserves award."

NOLAN BUSHNELL





» **Above:** Simple yet colourful, *Breakout* captured the imagination of many children with its easy-to-learn but challenging gameplay. **Above right:** Considering *Breakout* contained no humans, just a simple bat, this cover proves the fact you can never judge a book by its cover also rings true for some games

And although it was a fresh concept, it was based on familiarity. Nolan realised that people would recognise instantly what they had to do. It was a departure from the complexity of *Computer Space* and it would shape Bushnell's approach to videogaming for a long time to come.

"I began to quickly realise that because of the limited technology, games had to be fun, good and solid. We were the first to develop videogames so we had to make them simple, easy and quickly understood," he continues.

"Yet this wasn't all that easy to do. I think a simple game was harder to create than a complex one because it was impossible to hide a bad game. There was no capacity for putting in nice graphics to mask bad gameplay. In a way, I consider early videogames to be like Chess was 4,000 years ago. Both contain fundamental traits which have stood the test of time. They have created frameworks which are still adhered to today."

Nolan tried to get *Pong* manufactured but he was repeatedly turned down. So he persuaded Andy Capp's, a local bar in Sunnyvale, California, to install a cabinet containing the game for just one week to see how well it did.

After seven days, it had become jammed with quarters from eager punters. Nolan then mustered up the cash to create more machines and by 1973, 8,000 of them had been rolled out and Bushnell and Daubney were staring at a profit of $3.2 million.

"I'm very proud of *Pong*," admits Bushnell. "At the time I thought it was going to be good but certainly not the commercial success it was."

Two years later, Nolan developed the game for the home market and his $99



» Slow to take off but when it did it dominated for years to come, the Atari VCS was the first mainstream console

"THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY HAS CURRENTLY BEEN DOING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER AGAIN, WITH LITTLE INNOVATION OR OUT-OF-THE-BOX THINKING"

NOLAN BUSHNELL

BUSHNELL SAYS



DESPITE being intrinsically linked with *Pong*, Bushnell's favourite Atari game is *Touch Me*, an arcade game released in 1974 that was later created as a handheld device.

"It was one of the first electronic pattern-matching type games," Bushnell explains, describing the way players had to follow a pattern of lights and sounds and replicate them to get a high score. Most people remember it as Simon, a version created by MB Games.

"It continues to be knocked off, and it keeps everyone from a two-year-old to a 60-year-old entertained through its simple call and response memory play.

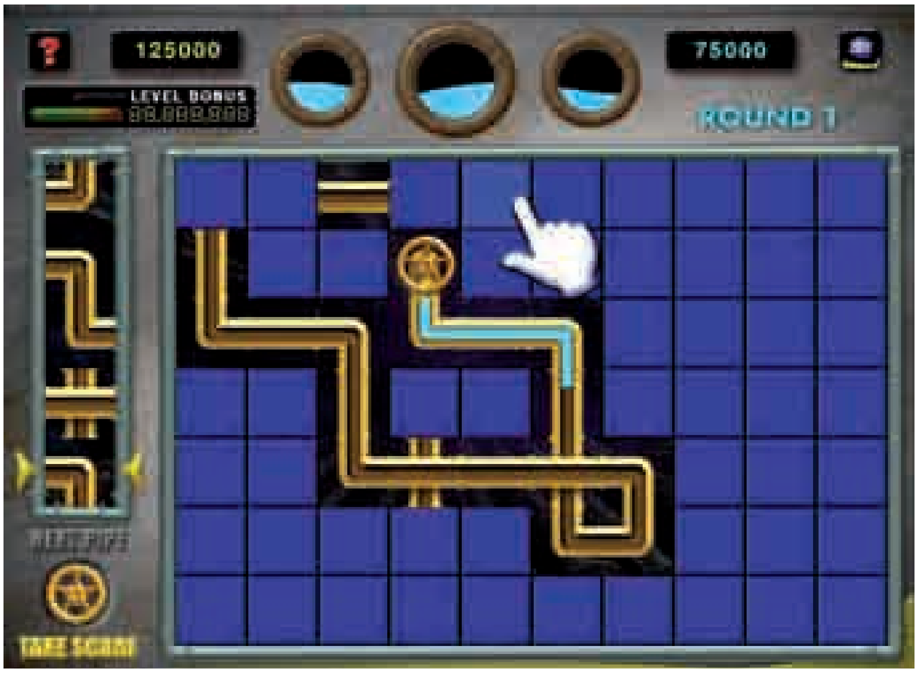
"Studies have shown that games are one of the best ways for people to learn and this shows how simple concepts can be successful and educational."

Following the *Touch Me* handheld, it was envisaged that *Breakout* and *Space Invaders* would also be created as portable devices but they unfortunately failed to make it to market.





» **Above and right:** Nolan's favourite game was not *Pong*, surprisingly, but this early version of Simon. Created as a handheld machine, the first Atari ever made, *Touch Me* hit a whole new market



» This version of *Pipemania* is one of a large range of card and puzzle games ported for use in the uWink restaurants

Pong console was eventually taken on by the department store, Sears. People were prepared to queue for hours to get their hands on *Pong*, which went on to sell 150,000 machines, but this grabbed the attention of other companies which had begun to create their own consoles.

In 1976, Nolan – who by now had 100 per cent control of Atari as Daubney had decided to offload his half of the company to him – sold Atari to Warner Communications for $28 million, half of which went to Bushnell who became the chief executive officer.

The company then created the Video Computer System (VCS), released in 1977. A year later Bushnell left the company, sparking a reorganisation within Atari. Yet the company went on to release *Space Invaders* on the VCS – a game that was proving a hit in the arcades – and the console's fortunes seemed unstoppable.

Today, having recently celebrated his 63rd birthday, he is still involved in videogaming.

In the years since Atari, he has been involved in umpteen different companies each with varying success, among them Chuck E Cheese's Pizza Time Theaters where children could eat and play games, Androbot Inc, which created personal, entertainment robots, and Sente Games.

But now he is pushing ahead with uWink, a hi-tech restaurant franchise which is based around videogames. Each outlet is packed with monitors from a two-sided touchscreen on every table to flat panels in front of every bar seat. Although the screens will show music videos and film trailers, their main use will be for games, such as card and puzzle titles, among them a variation of *Pipemania*.

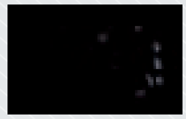
Bushnell says: "The videogame industry has currently been doing the same thing over and over again, with little innovation or out-of-the-box thinking. But before the videogame, games were for social interaction and parties, not just one-to-one entertainment – basically you and your computer or television – and uWink is aimed at bringing people together."

With his passion and drive, it's difficult not to wish him every success.

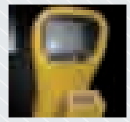


» These machines can be found dotted around Bushnell's uWink restaurants, re-introducing families to games

FEATURED GAMES

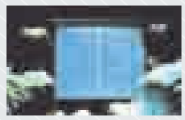


COMPUTER SPACE

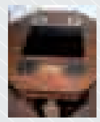


Regarded as the first coin-op ever released, *Computer Space* was nonetheless a flop. Even though the majority were impressed by this new futuristic-looking machine, it's difficult control methods were off-putting to many.

Nolan says: "This was my tribute to Steve Russell's *Spacewar* and it had modest success. I wanted to build on that game, make it more complex. Perhaps it was too complex."

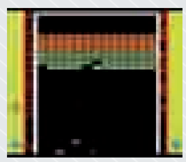


PONG



Pong was a game of skill that required quick reflexes and an alert mind – not bad for a game which, like *Tetris* years later, is built on such a simple premise.

Nolan says: "I wanted the simplest game I could think of and so decided that something with a bat and ball would be perfect. Programming the game so that the ball would shoot off at angles helped it to be fun and the scoring element gave it the competitive edge. Al did a great job on the sound."



BREAKOUT



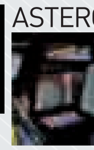
Breakout was Nolan Bushnell's third game. He designed the concept – basically a single-player Pong – and then asked a programmer called Steve Jobs to code it. Jobs set about programming the game with the help of Steve Wozniak. And Bushnell paid them $7,000 for the work (although just $350 was handed to Wozniak).

Nolan says: "This was an interesting game because I had such a hard time with it. At the time, the programmers at Atari wanted to create driving and flying games since they were engineers and wanted to create something they would be impressed by so nobody would volunteer for it. But I wanted this simple game to be created and I was pleased with the result."

Jobs and Wozniak later formed Apple Computers…



ASTEROIDS



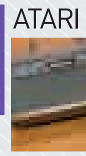
Nolan envisioned *Asteroids* as a variation of *Breakout*. And in 1980, *Asteroids* – together with Atari's *Lunar Lander* – became the first videogame to ever be registered in the Copyright Office in America.

Here you played a spaceship which had to blast large asteroids into smaller ones until the entire screen was cleared and it spawned many a copycat. Like *Breakout* and *Pong*, this has since been ported to virtually every known format, including the Atari VCS.

Nolan says: "*Asteroids* was simple and yet thrilling. If you look at *Asteroids* and *Breakout*, they are both about cleaning up the environment, whether it's breaking up rocks or destroying bricks. These were good, solid games."



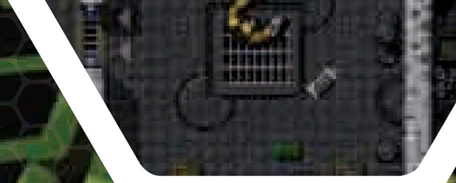
ATARI VCS



Also known as the Atari 2600, this was the classic home console which no home in the late 70s and early 80s could be without. With its woodgrain finish, this was a machine for the living room, not a toy for the children's bedroom. Atari had already dabbled in consoles, producing machines capable of playing just one game. But now the firm – and Nolan – wanted to push things further and create a machine which would play many games.

"We wanted something better than the single-game machines and so created a console which could be programmed to run many different games," says Bushnell. "Micro-processors had come down in price and made the project viable. We wanted the MOS Technology 6507 CPU which had only been created about three months earlier so it was cutting edge stuff.

"I still think this is a good console now and I'm so proud that it's still talked about today."



Now in its 16th year, Team 17 is one of Britain's few surviving game is fondly remembered for its technical achievements speak to Ashley Day about the early days of the Amiga's



» X2 was the PlayStation only sequel to Project X and it was top class



DEVELOPER LOOKBACK

TEAM 17

Team 17 started life on 5 December 1990 when Martyn Brown of 17 Bit Software, a successful shareware distributor, decided that he and a few like-minded Amiga enthusiasts could offer exciting, new games that took full advantage of the machine they loved so dearly. "As Amiga nuts and games nuts we were a little sick of the crappy ST ports that were coming out for the Amiga and wanted to do classic games that made the most of the hardware and delivered the spirit we felt was lacking," explains Martyn. "It was just one of those decisions when we decided to go for it and the team from 17 Bit became Team 17."

Martyn Brown and fellow 17 Bit member Rico Holmes set about assembling a super-developer made up of the most talented and passionate members from the Amiga demo scene. It became clear from the outset that each member's love for the Amiga platform would feed into their games. "The Amiga was always very special to us and we had a brilliant time developing games for it," recalls Martyn. "It wasn't a job as such, it was just enthusiasm carrying us along in those days." Due to the widespread popularity of Commodore's computer across mainland Europe, many of the Team resided on the continent and chose to work at a distance from the Yorkshire HQ. Martyn didn't see it as a problem: "To be honest, it was easier that way. Essentially what we had were a number of satellite studios, even if they were based in bedrooms/homes around the UK and substantially, Sweden. It just meant I spent a bit of time on the road, it never felt like a problem, even if it was before Email/Internet was widely used. We had 14.4K and (later 56k) modems – which were the dogs at the time."

With the fresh-faced and enthusiastic team in place it was soon time to begin work on their first professional title. *Full Contact*, a realistically styled one-on-one fighter, was released in the spring of 1991 and went straight to the top spot of the Amiga charts despite mass distribution of a pirate copy that erroneously credited the developer as 'Team 7'. At the budget price of £9.99 the game was an attractive purchase and very lucrative for Team 17, who decided to self publish and not lose out on any sales revenue. The strategy proved very useful for the team, as it was better able to finance future projects and, without a clueless publisher breathing down its neck, was free to create whatever it liked.

That creative freedom would pay off in a big way with Team 17's next and arguably best game: *Alien Breed*. Amiga Power described Breed as: "A very sophisticated game exploiting the ability of the Amiga to its fullest in both looks and gameplay". The review was typical of the general reaction to *Alien Breed*, the public went mad for Team 17's addictive blaster and bought enough copies to keep *Alien Breed: Special Edition* at the top of the Amiga's budget chart for over 33 weeks.

Following *Alien Breed* were a string of Team 17 hits, most notably the *Strider*-esque platform game *Assassin* and the *Gradius*-inspired *Project-X*. In two short years Team 17 had grown from a miniscule shareware distributor into one of Britain's biggest software talents. With each new game showcasing arcade quality graphics and gameplay it was amazing that the team had managed to remain

IN BRIEF

Starting life as a humble distributor of shareware and demos, Team 17 became one of the most prolific Amiga developers and publishers of the early nineties. Early titles like *Alien Breed* and *Superfrog* brought Team 17 fame until its breakthrough hit, *Worms*, brought it fortune. Team 17's early years as a self-funded developer paved the way for the independence it enjoys today and its status as a celebrity publisher in the Amiga days had talented artists and coders queuing up to make games for the teamsters.

independent developers. From Alien Breed to Worms, each and addictive gameplay. Martyn Brown and Marcus Dyson most cherished developer

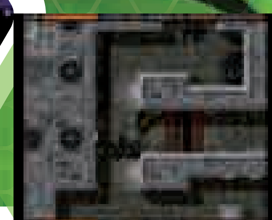




» Full Contact was Team 17's very first game. It's pretty isn't it?







exclusive to the Amiga. Martyn had considered other platforms but Team 17 would not go multi-format for several years. "We almost went Mega Drive at one point in '92, to the extent that we almost left the Amiga altogether, such were the offers. However, we enjoyed our publishing position too much."

With Team 17 now well established as a successful Amiga publisher they had begun to publish the games of other developers. *Assassin*, developed by Psionic Systems, was the first of many yet, unlike other publisher/developer relationships, Team 17 worked much closer with the developers. Staff from Team 17 would often assist the developer or the Team would permanently recruit some developers into the main group. Allister Brimble composed the music for *Assassin*, for example, no doubt due to his relationship with Team 17 after writing the soundtrack to *Alien Breed*. With fresh talent from the Amiga scene coming and going through Team 17's doors, the publisher felt like a special club that everyone could be a part of. Legendary Amiga animator Eric Schwartz created a brilliant intro-sequence for *Superfrog* and freelance programmer Jamie Woodhouse was temporarily brought into the Team 17 fold to make *ATR* and *Qwak*: a particular favourite amongst Team 17's staff.

By 1993 Team 17 had hit its stride and released a staggering ten games and five compilations in the space of 12 months. It wasn't a case of quantity over quality though, as those releases included memorable games like *Alien Breed II*, *Superfrog* and *Body Blows*. In recognition of its swift growth and large output in 1993 Team 17 won a Publisher of the Year award, which it shared with the monolithic Electronic Arts. Just one of the achievements that Martyn Brown is proud of: "There are many, First Game, First Number One, the original *Alien Breed*, *Superfrog* and *Body Blows*... The feeling that *Arcade Pool* got". Things couldn't have been more promising for the rapidly maturing developer but the events of the following months were to cast a shadow over the Amiga scene that would threaten the continued production of Team 17's Amiga games.

Following the failure of Commodore's consolised Amiga 1200, the CD32, the giant computing firm was in serious trouble. Sales were falling, piracy was high and too much profit had been invested in new models of Amiga that nobody wanted. In April 1994, Commodore filed for bankruptcy and production of all Amiga hardware came to an abrupt halt. The Amiga's future looked bleak but, remarkably, new games kept coming. The A1200 was a little over a year old with vast quantities of untapped potential, its position as a powerful home computer also meant that it had a large user base who were still willing to buy new software. Team 17 decided to stick with the Amiga for the time being and it was in this period that its best ever games were made.

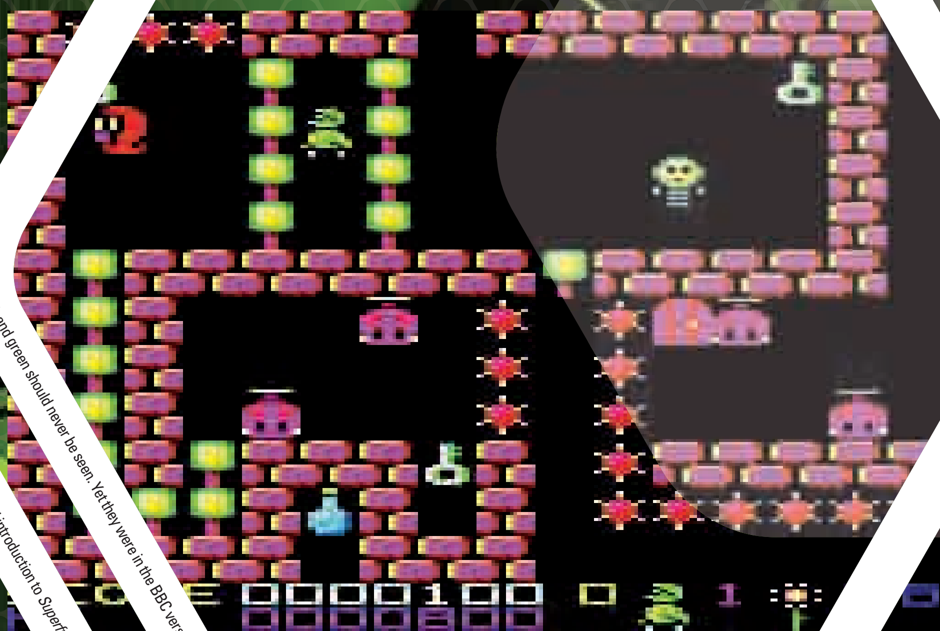
Seeing that the Amiga market was about to go through serious upheaval after the fall of Commodore, Marcus Dyson, the editor of Amiga Format decided that a change in career was needed and left the world of publishing to join the ranks of Team 17. "It was apparent that the Amiga was in decline," says Marcus. "I thought, and in the end it turned out not to be true, that Team 17 would continue to be involved with the Amiga for longer than Future Publishing did." Moving back to his Wakefield home was the icing on the cake. "It was easy to move

16 GOING ON 17

As Team 17 fittingly approaches its 17th year of independent development we asked Martyn Brown if he ever imagined that it would last so long. "Absolutely not," he replied, "it's very difficult to plan long term in the games industry. We were very young and very naive back then and it's incredible to find that we're now in our 16th year, world-renowned and vastly more experienced and worldly-wise, some 40 plus projects and 150 or so skus, not to mention about 12 to 14 million game sales, on. I'm not sure how we'll celebrate year 17, but I can lend a few guesses..." How about an anthology of Team 17's Amiga hits for modern consoles? "Not right now, but who knows? The back catalogue has been licensed for a number of things and people will see them. Above all, I'm delighted there's still interest in our early works and hopefully we'll get a chance to revisit some of them in the future again. I'd like to thank everyone who played and enjoyed our games and gave us great feedback."







» Pink and green should never be seen. Yet they were in the BBC version of *Qwak*



» Eric Schwartz's animated introduction to *Superfrog*. Superb stuff…



» Marcus Dyson stars in the grainy FMV intro to *Alien Breed Tower Assault*



CANNED GOODS

Every developer has a few unfinished works locked away in the vault and Team 17 is, as you would expect, no exception. Some, like the new *Alien Breed* and *Superfrog* games, never made it past the concept stage whilst others were shown off in magazines and adverts only to mysteriously disappear. *Final Over Cricket*, a *Sensible Soccer*-style cricket game, was canned in 1994 when the coder unexpectedly decided to stop working on the game. As one of Team 17's satellite developers, they could do nothing about his disappearance and had to forget about the promising title.

King of Thieves was intended to be a medieval spin on the *Alien Breed* games but was cancelled in 1996, as was *Pussies Galore*, a cheekily titled platform game. "*Pussies* and *King Of Thieves* were canned because we didn't feel they were going to be great games," says Martyn. We imagine they're no great loss then, although *Final Over Cricket* does look as though it would have been brilliant fun.

back here and it enabled me to hang out with my old friends and it was also a pleasure to see a publisher out of Wakefield doing well."

Marcus began his career at Team 17 as Project Manger on *Alien Breed Tower Assault* and was immediately thrown into the Team's unique method of development. "It was part of the company's culture that everybody was involved in everything and because I had a background in graphic design I'd help out with map and packaging design whenever there was an opportunity." Marcus also appeared in the infamous FMV introduction to the CD32 version of *Alien Breed Tower Assault*, the low-budget space opera was as embarrassing then as it is now. "Someone said it was like the cast of Emmerdale doing *Star Wars*, which I think is racist," laments Marcus. "You know, we're Northerners but we're proud of the fact."

Marcus' contributions to Team 17's projects became much more instrumental to the developer when its most successful game hit a stumbling block before it had even been released. During Marcus' time as editor of Amiga Format, the magazine ran a competition where readers had to create a game in Blitz Basic. Andy Davidson, an artist and Amiga nut from Bournemouth, submitted *Total Wormage*: the demo that eventually became *Worms*. Ironically enough, the game slipped through the judges' net and went completely unnoticed. It wasn't until the following ECTS that Andy had the chance to personally force them to play his game and Team 17 realised the game had to be published. 14 months later the reprogrammed and re-titled *Worms* was ready to take over the world but one thing stood in their way. When Andy told the Team that he had originally submitted the game to Amiga Format's competition Marcus quickly realised, with horror, that every demo submitted to the magazine automatically became the property of Future Publishing. Cunningly, Marcus managed to get Amiga Format to transfer all the rights to *Total Wormage* before anyone knew how much of a success Worms would be. "Since I had only recently left Future, I called Greg Ingham, and asked him if he had any objection to us using the game. He said no and the day was saved." It was a move that proved great for Team 17 and, in hindsight, not so good for Future…

After achieving worldwide acclaim for the Amiga version of *Worms* in 1995, Team 17 wisely decided that now was the time to go multi-format. Unfortunately, not everyone agreed. Marcus tells us: "Sony didn't want to take *Worms* at all". Every other platform signed up to Worms. They came along, looked at the game and said 'That's great'. 3DO were literally beating the door down to get *Worms*, but Sony said 'No. The policy is 3D games only". Hence you got *3D Lemmings*, the game that effectively killed off the franchise." Fast-forward to 2005 and Team 17 have ironically found itself developing a 2D version of *Lemmings* for Sony's new PSP.

Needless to say, Sony wasn't stupid enough to turn down a game that had sold in excess of 5 million copies and soon relented on its policy. The rest is history: Team 17 went from being heroes of the Amiga scene to world-renowned videogame developers almost over night. A successful PC and console career was calling but Team 17 weren't done with the Amiga yet. "There was a distinct feeling in the company that we ought to give a showcase to the people that had



The PlayStation 2 Alien Breed that was canned last year

» Marcus Dyson. Ex-project manager for Team 17

upgraded their Amigas," recalls Marcus. And with that in mind Team 17 produced *Alien Breed 3D II: The Killing Grounds* and, although its gameplay suffered significantly, the graphics were absolutely stunning: a triumph of coding for any Amiga developer. As a tribute to the game-starved Amiga fans it was a welcome gift that was bettered only by Team 17's next and final Amiga release. 1997 brought *Worms: The Director's Cut*, an Amiga exclusive sequel to *Worms* that was as much a treat for Amiga owners as it was for creator Andy Davidson. Marcus tells us: "*Director's Cut* was really more about Andy being given a free reign to do whatever was in his slightly strange brain". *Worms: DC* was a critical success but only sold 4000 copies at retail. Due to the Amiga's diminishing popularity, Martyn Brown decided to end Amiga production for good and concentrate on the expanding console and PC sector. "We had grown up with the Amiga but we weren't all enthusiastic teenagers anymore, we'd got wives, kids and mortgages – we couldn't just do stuff for the love of it".

Since then a number of *Worms* sequels have followed but the move to 3D has failed to recreate the magic of the original game. The sun has set on Team 17's classic period but a new age is dawning. New 2D versions of Worms will soon hit the handhelds and Team 17 has returned to its roots with a remake of the Amiga classic *Lemmings*. Martyn Brown is optimistic about the future. "We've poured a lot of tender TLC into *Lemmings* and we're sure it'll be a massive hit on PSP." As for their own franchises, "*Alien Breed*... Lets see, that might be worth a shout," he says with a smile.

CALL THE LAWYERS!

Everybody loved Team 17 back in the early nineties, everyone except Amiga Power. The popular Amiga magazine had a long running feud with Team 17 that first appeared to surface when a cheat code in *Alien Breed II* revealed a secret message that criticised Amiga Power's review style. The easiest CPU characters in many of Team 17's games were also named after Amiga Power reviewers. The magazine's staff weren't happy and Team 17's games soon came under heavy criticism. *Kingpin* scored 47% and *ATR* 38%: both, in hindsight, particularly unfair scores. Team 17, perhaps taking the joke a little too seriously, filed a lawsuit against the magazine and subsequently refused to send Amiga Power any review copies. It even went as far as to demand that other Future magazines, like Amiga Format, not supply Amiga Power with their own copies. The situation hardly improved from there – Amiga Power were forced to buy its own Team 17 games and repeatedly gave them negative reviews, whether they deserved it or not. *Worms* scored an unrealistic 60% whilst *Alien Breed 3D II* scored 59% in the main body with a fake score of 98% at the foot of the page. Cheeky.

SOFTOGRAPHY

1991

Full Contact
System: Amiga
Publisher: Team 17

Alien Breed
System: Amiga, PC
Publisher: Team 17

Alien Breed Special Edition '92
System: Amiga, CD32
Publisher: Team 17

1992

Project-X
System: Amiga, CD32, PC
Publisher: Team 17

Assassin
System: Amiga
Publisher: Team 17

1993

Alien Breed II: The Horror Continues
System: Amiga, CD32
Publisher: Team 17

Superfrog
System: Amiga, CD32, PC
Publisher: Team 17

Project-X Special Edition
System: Amiga
Publisher: Team 17

Qwak
System: Amiga, CD32
Publisher: Team 17

F17 Challenge
System: Amiga, CD32
Publisher: Team 17

Apidya
System: Amiga
Publisher: Team 17

Cardiaxx
System: Amiga
Publisher: Team 17

Overdrive
System: Amiga, PC
Publisher: Team 17

Body Blows
System: Amiga, PC
Publisher: Team 17

Silverball
System: PC
Publisher: Team 17

1994

Arcade Pool
System: Amiga, CD32, PC
Publisher: Team 17

Super Stardust
System: Amiga, CD32
Publisher: Team 17

Body Blows Galactic
System: Amiga
Publisher: Team 17

Alien Breed: Tower Assault
System: Amiga, CD32, PC
Publisher: Team 17

Assassin Special Edition
System: Amiga
Publisher: Team 17

Ultimate Body Blows
System: CD32, PC
Publisher: Team 17

1995

The Speris Legacy
System: Amiga, CD32
Publisher: Ocean

Kingpin: Arcade Sports Bowling
System: Amiga, CD32, PC
Publisher: Team 17

ATR - All Terrain Racing
System: Amiga, CD32
Publisher: Team 17

Worms
System: Amiga, CD32, PC, Mega Drive, Saturn, Jaguar, Mac, PlayStation, Game Boy, SNES
Publisher: Ocean

Alien Breed 3D
System: Amiga, CD32
Publisher: Ocean

1996

Alien Breed 3D II: The Killing Grounds
System: Amiga
Publisher: Ocean

World Rally Fever
System: PC
Publisher: Ocean

X2
System: PlayStation
Publisher: Ocean

1997

Worms: The Director's Cut
System: Amiga
Publisher: Ocean

Worms 2
System: PC
Publisher: Microprose

1998

Addiction Pinball
System: PC
Publisher: Microprose

Nightlong: Union City Conspiracy
System: PC, Amiga (Converted by ClickBOOM in 1999)
Publisher: Microprose

1999

Name: Arcade Pool II
System: PC
Publisher: Microprose

Phoenix
System: PC
Publisher: Microprose

Worms Armageddon
System: PC, PlayStation, Dreamcast, Nintendo 64, Game Boy Color
Publisher: Microprose

Worms Pinball
System: PlayStation
Publisher: Infogrames

2001

Worms World Party
System: PC, Dreamcast, PlayStation, Game Boy Advance, N-Gage, Gizmondo
Publisher: Virgin

Stunt GP
System: PC, Dreamcast, PlayStation2
Publisher: Atari

2002

Worms Blast
System: PC, Mac, GameCube, Game Boy Advance, PlayStation2
Publisher: Ubisoft

2003

Worms 3D
System: PC, PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube, Mac
Publisher: Sega

2004

Worms Forts: Under Siege
System: PC, PlayStation 2, Xbox,
Publisher: Sega

2005

Worms 4: Mayhem
System: PC, PlayStation 2, Xbox
Publisher: Codemasters

2006

Lemmings
System: PSP
Publisher: Sony

Worms: Open Warfare
System: PSP, DS
Publisher: THQ

Timeline

With over 40 games to their name, there are plenty of Team 17 titles to choose from. Here are all its Amiga releases from 1991 to 1999



FULL CONTACT [1991]

Systems: Amiga 500

Team 17's demo background shone through in the amazing intro sequence to this one-on-one fighting game. Gameplay left a lot to be desired, however, and paled in comparison to the superior *IK+*. The introduction, realistic graphics and brilliant soundtrack are all still great now, but this really isn't worth playing and, as Team 17's debut title, it showed little sign of the brilliance that was to come.



ALIEN BREED

[1991]

Systems: Amiga 500

Rico Holmes and Andreas Tadic fused *Gauntlet* with *Alien* to create one of the greatest co-operative games on the Amiga. Some prefer *Chaos Engine* for the run 'n' gun fun but *Alien Breed's* emphasis on complicated mazes, ammo conservation and the smart use of keys made it far more playable. The atmospheric graphics and music made *Alien Breed* that much more compelling to play but, at only six levels long, the experience was a short-lived one.

1 9 9 1



ALIEN BREED SPECIAL EDITION '92

[1992]

Systems: Amiga 500, CD32

With a true sequel to *Alien Breed* still several months away, Team 17 decided to keep the fans happy by releasing this extended version of the original. Now with 12 full levels, the game was twice the size of its predecessor and all the better for it. For those dying to play the first *Breed* this is the best version to go for and much easier to find than the original these days.

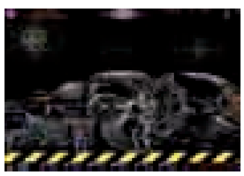


PROJECT-X

[1992]

Systems: Amiga 500, CD32, PC

Team 17 was a huge fan of arcade-style games and no other title proved it more than *Project-X*. Essentially a clone of Konami's *Gradius*, *Project-X* was a horizontal shooter with selectable power ups. It distinguished itself from the Japanese hit by allowing you to upgrade your selected weapon several times to the point where bullets and lasers filled the screen. An unmistakably European techno soundtrack rounded off an excellent shoot-'em-up.



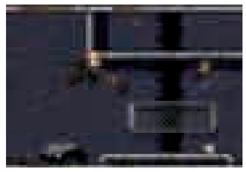
ASSASSIN

[1992]

Systems: Amiga 500

"Although this game bears many similarities to Strider, it's actually a lot better" (CU Amiga Nov 92). Darran's probably spitting blood at the sight of that quote right now and he'd be right to do so. *Assassin's* wall hanging antics were more than a little similar to the Capcom classic and, whilst it was a very enjoyable Amiga game, it certainly wasn't a *Strider* beater. Think of this more as a fun homage.

1 9 9 2



ALIEN BREED II - THE HORROR CONTINUES

[1993]

Systems: Amiga 500, Amiga 1200, CD32

From the moment *Alien Breed II* started to its final levels the action was a non-stop, pure adrenaline rush. Aliens could fire back, helicopters swept the planet's surface with deadly aim and levels self-destructed with dramatic timing. This was heart-pounding gameplay at its finest and yet another flawless episode in Team 17's signature blastathon. The A1200 version had better graphics but was much more difficult and prone to occasional slowdown.



SUPERFROG [1993]

Systems: Amiga 500, CD32, PC

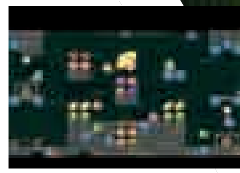
While some saw Zool and James Pond as the Amiga's best platform mascots it was the Lucozade guzzling Superfrog that stood out from the crowd. Tight controls and an excellent theme tune (from Allister Brimble again) made *Superfrog* much more fun to play. Levels were packed with secret areas and interspersed with a great little fruit machine simulator that added a distinctly British touch to the game.



PROJECT X SPECIAL EDITION [1993]

Systems: Amiga 500

Unlike *Alien Breed Special Edition* this didn't feature any extra levels at all. Instead Team 17 had listened to complaints that the original *Project X* was too hard. It was much easier to power up the craft this time around and, in comparison to the original, you lost less firepower every time you died. This was a great way to see the beautiful later levels that were too hard to reach in the original.



QWAK [1993]

Systems: Amiga 500, CD32

Originally a BBC Micro game by Jamie Woodhouse, this 16-bit upgrade was a highly addictive single-screen platformer in the same vein as Taito's *Bubble Bobble*. This is definitely one of the most colourful games to appear on the Amiga and also one of the most playable. It's a shame that this charmingly old-school platformer never really got the attention it deserved as it's definitely one of Team 17's greatest releases.



F17 CHALLENGE [1993]

Systems: Amiga 500, CD32

Looking much more like something Sega would make than the typical Amiga developer, *F17 Challenge* was initially eye-catching and very arcade-like. The game was fast and fun with yet another great soundtrack but lacked the depth to keep players entertained for more than a couple of evenings. But at a price of £12.99 who really had the right to complain about longevity? Not us.



APIDYA [1993]

Systems: Amiga 500

Team 17 had nothing to do with the development of this side-scrolling shooter as it had already been published by someone else a year or so before. Despite that, *Apidya* fit into the Team 17 catalogue very comfortably as it played similarly to *Project-X* with the exception that you took control of a wasp and had to blast through other insects in the garden. Think *Gradius* crossed with *Buck Bumble* and you'd be spot on.



CARDIAXX [1993]

Systems: Amiga 500

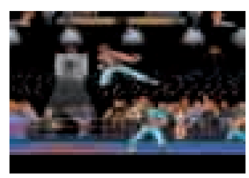
Yet another shoot-'em-up from Team 17. The usual Team 17 guys didn't develop *Cardiaxx*, as it was a budget re-release of an Eclipse Design game, and lacked the flair of the developer's internal projects. *Cardiaxx* played like a cut down version of *Defender* and was remarkable only for the inexplicable way it displayed the score right in the middle of the screen.



OVERDRIVE [1993]

Systems: Amiga 500, PC

A racing game that was an awful lot like *Micro Machines* with the exception that it was about as enjoyable as eating a pair of dirty underpants. The biggest problem was that it ran so quickly that it was impossible to take a corner properly unless you knew it was coming. This effectively made *Overdrive* a memory test that, once each track was committed to the grey matter, actually required no skill whatsoever.

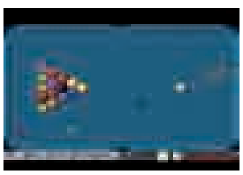


BODY BLOWS [1993]

Systems: Amiga 500, PC

The original *Body Blows* was hailed as a *Street Fighter* beater by the specialist press back in 1993. Going back to the game now though, we have to wonder just what they were thinking. The loading times are unbearably slow and the animation rather turgid. Worst of all, with only one fire button, the attacks feel limited and cumbersome. The only *Street Fighter* this was better than was the C64 version.

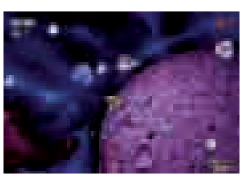
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ARCADE POOL [1994]

Systems: Amiga 500, CD32, PC

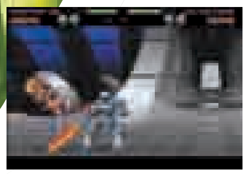
Whilst games like *Jimmy White's Cueball* had much better graphics there was still little to complain about when it came to *Arcade Pool*. Presentation may have been a little basic but the physics were spot on and the use of just two mouse buttons to play kept things just the right side of simple. *Arcade Pool* is notable for its realistic crowd noises that, if you listened carefully, contained actual snippets of conversation.



SUPER STARDUST [1994]

Systems: Amiga 1200, CD32

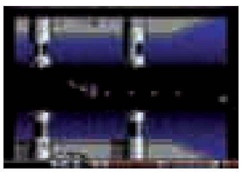
A pretty cool *Asteroids* clone from Bloodhouse software. *Super Stardust* is most notable for its stunning graphics that made full use of the AGA chipset. From the eye-melting range of colours to the metallic sheen on the spacecraft everything looked superb. The 3D bonus levels – think *Microcosm* but better – were an excellent showcase for the A1200's abilities.



BODY BLOWS GALACTIC [1994]

Systems: Amiga 500

Body Blows Galactic, like its predecessor, looked great and begged to be liked. Great graphics do not make a great game though and, aside from the science fiction theme, there was little to differentiate this from the lacklustre original. Check out *Shadow Fighter* or *Fightin' Spirit* if you're after an Amiga brawler that actually plays as well as it looks.



APACHE [1994]

Systems: Amiga 500

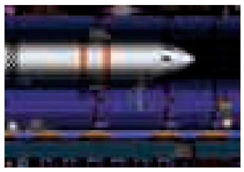
Apache was a horizontal shooter in which you had to pilot a helicopter, rescue civilians and carry them back to base. The game was created by the same coder and artist who made *Assassin* and was given away free with *Body Blows Galactic*. Although it's always good to get something for free, Apache's short levels and sloppy controls made it quite a poor gift.



ALIEN BREED TOWER ASSAULT [1994]

Systems: Amiga 1200, CD32, PC

Tower Assault was the final 2D *Alien Breed* and, next to *Worms*, is Team 17's most re-playable game. The A1200's abilities were used to the fullest to make a beautifully realised, fast-paced shooter. The new ability to walk backwards whilst firing complemented the action movie feel and the non-linear levels ensured that there was always something new to see. Avoid the PC version if possible, as there are loads of levels missing.



ASSASSIN SPECIAL EDITION [1994]

Systems: Amiga 500

You've got to love Team 17, just for never giving up. *Assassin Special Edition* had tighter gameplay than the original and was a full £15 cheaper. The main difference was that the default weapon had been changed from a boomerang to a gun. This made the pace of the game much quicker and the difficulty a little fairer. *Assassin* was now a fairly enjoyable game...but it still wasn't better than *Strider*.



ULTIMATE BODY BLOWS [1994]

Systems: CD32, PC

Team 17 tried, for the third and final time, to get the *Body Blows* formula right with this special CD32 edition. The roster combined combatants from *Body Blows* and *Body Blows Galactic* whilst the controls were spread over the joypad's four face buttons. The same old problems reared their ugly heads though: combat was still awkwardly stilted and unbalanced whilst the move to CD did nothing to speed up the loading times.

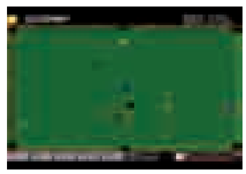
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THE SPERIS LEGACY [1995]

Systems: Amiga 1200, CD32

Team 17's habit of cloning popular Japanese titles really didn't pay off this time: nobody can out-*Zelda* Nintendo and only a fool would try. Graphically this looked very similar to *Link To The Past* but lacked much of the charm of the classic SNES game. *The Speris Legacy* ultimately failed because it couldn't replicate the expertly formed structure of *Zelda's* exploration/combat/item-collection cocktail.



ARCADE SNOOKER [1995]

Systems: Amiga 500

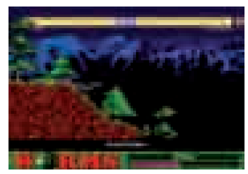
Back when cover-mounted disks were something special, Team 17 knocked *Arcade Snooker* together to be given away free with the July '95 issue of CU Amiga. This was nothing more than a reworked version of *Arcade Pool* but it was a full game nonetheless. It played well and, as a freebie, was a great example of the developer's love for the Amiga community.



ATR - ALL TERRAIN RACING [1995]

Systems: Amiga 500, CD32

Jamie Woodhouse's other Team 17 game is probably the best racer to come from the developer. The graphics and sound were exemplary as always and the gameplay was very addictive. The likes of *Super Skidmarks* were better racing games but this was still worthy of a few laps nonetheless.



WORMS [1995]

Systems: Amiga 500, CD32, PC, Mega Drive, Saturn, Jaguar, Mac, PlayStation, Game Boy, SNES

The game that put Team 17 on the map! Andy Davidson's *Total Wormage* went from Blitz Basic demo to multi-format success over night, largely because of Davidson's quirky British humour but also because of the hard work that went into creating a game engine that stood up to countless hours of multi-player mayhem. The Amiga version remains the best to this day thanks to the ability to create new levels in Deluxe Paint.

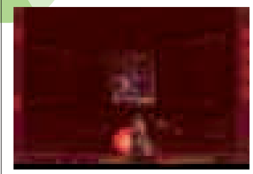


ALIEN BREED 3D [1995]

Systems: Amiga 1200, CD32

Id Software didn't believe it could be done but Andy Clitheroe somehow managed to get a highly playable and atmospheric *Doom* clone running on the humble A1200. Granted, the move to 3D resulted in *Alien Breed* losing a lot of the original's unique charm but it was still fantastic to play. This was the moment that the Amiga stood up to the bullying of the PC and proved its worth as a powerful home computer.

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ALIEN BREED 3D II: THE KILLING GROUNDS [1996]

Systems: Amiga 1200

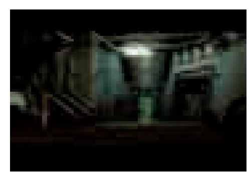
Ambition can be a terrible thing. Having mastered the *Doom* clone with *Alien Breed 3D*, Team 17 wanted to make an FPS to rival *Quake*. It got the engine running but, even on expanded machines, the Amiga coughed and spluttered under the strain. Poor AI and a steep difficulty curve ganged up with a sluggish frame-rate to punish anyone who dared to play. Most struggled, or couldn't be bothered, to play past level one.



WORMS: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT [1997]

Systems: Amiga 1200

The Team's last true Amiga game was a farewell gift to the community that had supported it for the past seven years and is widely regarded as the definitive *Worms* game. Andy Davidson was given free rein to go to town on the title and created many great new weapons like the Old Woman, Mad Cow and Sheep On A Rope. To quote another Amiga classic: "War has never been so much fun".



NIGHTLONG – UNION CITY CONSPIRACY [1999]

Systems: PC, Amiga CD

Although Team 17 had officially abandoned the Amiga in 1997 there were still several other developers and publishers producing Amiga games well into the new millennium. Canadian publisher ClickBOOM was one such entity and released many of the Amiga's last games of the nineties including this Team 17 developed graphic adventure. Owing much to *Blade Runner*, *Nightlong* was a half-decent adventure that went down well with those who refused to let the Amiga die.

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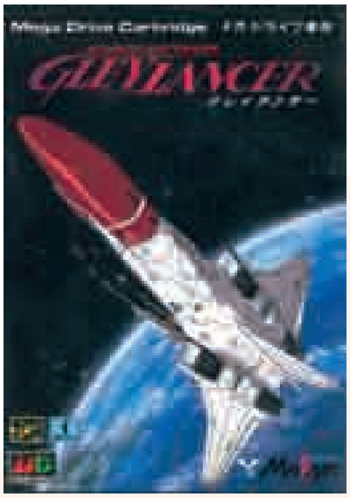
遠くの稀で、エキゾチックなゲームを愛する人々のため

FULL OF EASTERN

AND YOU THOUGHT THE MEGA DRIVE'S DEFINING MOMENT WAS SONIC THE HEDGEHOG...

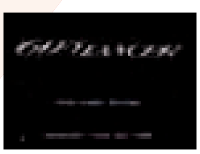
GLEY LANCER

IN THE KNOW



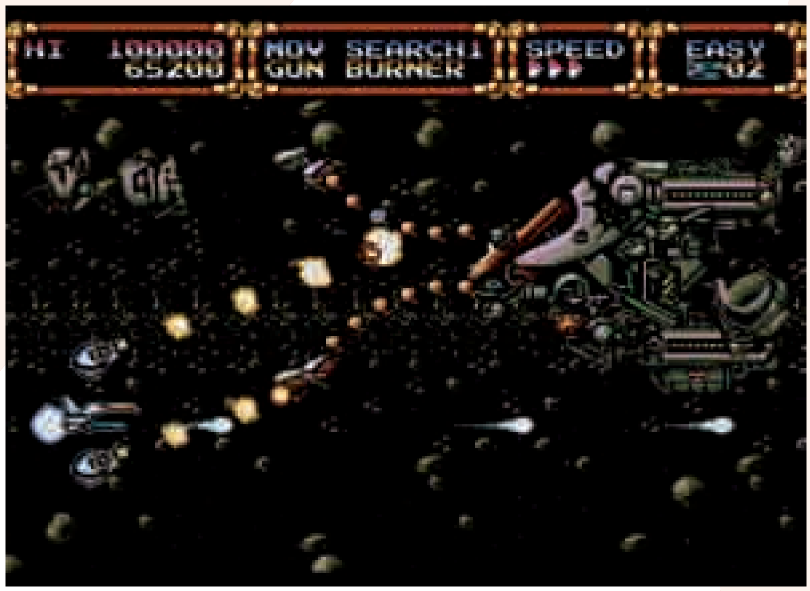
- » **PUBLISHER:** NCS CORP
- » **DEVELOPER:** MASAYA
- » **FEATURED HARDWARE:** SEGA MEGA DRIVE
- » **ALSO AVAILABLE FOR:** N/A
- » **EXPECT TO PAY:** £60 +
- » **CAN'T IMPORT? THEN WHY NOT TRY:** EMPIRE OF STEEL

AKA, *Steel Empire*, Hot B's pseudo-cautionary blaster took its influences from Jules Verne's vision of a nightmare future, melding hulking, steel cities and bizarre flying machines. Nazi subtext, coupled with the de facto apocalyptic story arc, added atmosphere to a shooter of subtle gains – tactical ship choices, hypnotically-beautiful flak patterns plus the masterstroke inclusion of vertical, diagonal and inverse scrolling – each was integral to an achingly inimitable shooter with a difficulty curve matched only by the Godly *Layer Section*.



Interesting fact
Along with many other shoot-'em-ups from the period, *Gley Lancer* suffers from the English/Japanese translation phenomenon known as 'Engrish'. As with many other words, the 'r' of 'grey' was substituted with an 'l', resulting in the skewed name we've come to know.

While it was possible to buy 8-bit consoles such as the PC Engine and Famicom (providing you knew where to look) it wasn't until the introduction of the 16-bit machines that import gaming truly took off in the UK. Each month, Retro Gamer will take a look at classic Japanese games that criminally never made it to UK shores. This month it's the expensive, yet amazingly good Gley Lancer



» A metallic voice heralds the arrival of the Stage One boss – destroy the arms then the canopy

メガ駆動機構 **By 1992, the Mega Drive had hit its stride. Within the space of a few months, the 'fab four' shoot-'em-ups – *Hellfire, Gynoug, Steel Empire* and *Zero Wing* – arrived in the UK, establishing the importance of the genre to Sega's powerhouse black box.** Each a zeitgeist signpost in its own right, it should have been natural progression for *Gley Lancer* to follow suit, riding the wave of rapid-fire fervour into the domestic territories. But, for Masaya's horizontally-scrolling shooter, there was a sting in the tail – it would never see release outside of Japan.

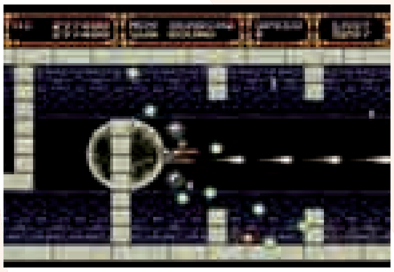
The reasoning remains elusive: conceivably, there was a reluctance to tackle Techno Soft's forthcoming *Thunder Force IV* head-on. Perhaps it was a simple financial decision, or possibly a lack of distribution partners that prevented *Gley Lancer* from enjoying an official export license and commercial success abroad. Whatever the rationale, the lack of a PAL conversion served as a double-edged sword, driving the game into relative obscurity, whilst simultaneously casting an iron-clad reputation that would linger on long after the cartridge had run its course.

Nowadays, the reasons for such an absence are moot: a retro-revival, coupled with (whisper it) emulation, allows the dedicated to sample the qualities of *Gley Lancer* with minimum fuss. And such qualities are evident from the very start, as the story – or what can be deciphered of it – concerns the hero's rescue of her father. Throughout, cut-scenes further the narrative, something that was typically deficient in shooters of the era. Such consideration for seeming trivialities sets *Gley Lancer* apart from the crowd.

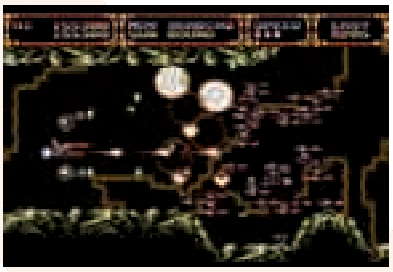
And rightly so. Pile into the first level and it's obvious that the visuals have been as

GAMES FROM THE EAST WHICH NEVER MADE IT TO UK SOIL

N PROMISE



» Engines need to be set at minimum while negotiating these walls. Too much thrust and you could be smashed to pieces



» A good example of the 'twitch' sections that litter the game. Be on your guard – the enemy has suicidal tendencies here



» Descending these ice caverns is a stroke of genius, bending the idea of 'horizontal scrolling' beyond its limits

lovingly crafted as the storytelling, the player emerging in a vast rock field. Soon, the appearance of a giant, screen-filling planet in crescent form indicates that the ship is actually deep within the planet's rings. Such striking designs are prevalent throughout the whole game and, despite the occasional spell of graphical sterility, it's beauty that resonates: icy caverns replete with crumbling walls; threatening skies lit crimson by a waning sun; a hulking space freighter in homage to *R-Type's* third-level behemoth – this, and more besides plants *Gley Lancer* firmly in the shooter big league. Game play aside, names like *Aero Blasters*, *Gaiares* and *Tatsujin* pale rapidly, Masaya's prowess with the M68000 chipset giving the game the graphical upper-hand.

Sonically, there's much to laud, too; the score is a succession of pieces that remain lodged in the memory, each as important as the level it accompanies. Particularly impressive are level two and three's signature themes, the former a fiercely staccato slice of prestissimo electronic rock that mirrors a high-speed sea-level assault, the latter a laid-back groove which compliments the measured approach to stage three's caverns. Elsewhere, there are other tracks to commend, particularly the closing instrumental ballad. That said, it's something that will divide fans into either 'epic emotion' or 'saccharine cliché' camps.

Ultimately, however, gameplay is the true litmus test and *Gley Lancer* scores highly here: enemy attack patterns begin predictably, with frontal assaults, but Masaya has augmented the ordinary by punctuating it with bursts of high-speed, screen-wide drones that not only fly in seemingly chaotic fashion, but ladle on waves of fire, testing the reflexes. On medium-to-high difficultly settings, it's not unlike 'twitch' play, having more akin with *Batsugun* or *Mars Matrix*, than, say, *Gradius'* considered, regimental forms. Witness it during the opening level and expect confusion – trying to discern between harmful flak and the rock-strewn backplane is often more luck than judgement.

Further variation surfaces as enemies approach from behind and below, sometimes staggered, other times simultaneously. Environmental challenges often meet with unreadable attack patterns – attempting to negotiate the fourth level's alternating walls on slow thrust, as circular cannons fire diagonally is a recipe for a quick death. Fortunately, ship weaponry is twofold, creating complex ways of despatching the enemy. Like the eponymous 'option', two satellite clones can be collected, their response pattern set before play commences. Choices include the predictable 'normal', 'reverse' and 'search', as well as 'multi' (reminiscent of *Sol Deace's* swept-angle lasers) 'shadow' (think Gradius) and 'roll' (Thunder Force's 'claw'). Each will affect later strategies, especially when coupled with the plethoric weapons pick-ups. For example, fixed-length sabres are extremely powerful, but short-range. Tie them to rolling clones and the resultant circle of death is terrifying. Other types include a precision laser, slow-moving spread bombs, a fiery burner, widespread five-way and a 'reaches-all-areas' bouncing plasma gun.



» The visual beauty of the game reaches its zenith during this fantastic cloudscape phase

Where bosses are concerned, Masaya has excelled itself, blending organic and mechanical, much like *Last Resort* or the aforementioned *Gynoug*. Whether angular rockets, Hindu Gods or hideous sub-foetal, phallic-equipped deformities, the parade of mayors is as imaginative as it is menacing.

But, like any stellar game, *Gley Lancer* is more than the sum of its parts. It's a Gestalt number that requires experiencing rather than reading about. Despite being eclipsed by the technicalities of *Ex Ranza*, or firmly whipped by the explosive speed and colour of *Thunder Force III* (which also never made it to the UK), Masaya's blaster remains a first-class illustration of the Mega Drive during its halcyon days – a time when shoot-'em-ups mattered. Irrespective of the region-neutering, a mere few minutes of play shows *Gley Lancer* for what it really is – an understated victory. Buy it, play it and love it.

私を読み、私に書くことができ、私に知らせれば好みのゲームはある

THE MAKING OF...

TURRICAN

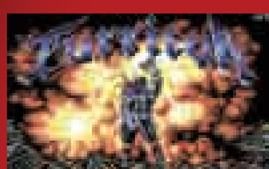
Created in 1990, Manfred Trenz's Turrican remains a benchmark shooter that perfectly combines both platform and shoot-'em-up elements to create a thoroughly absorbing title. Eager to learn more about the landmark C64 shooter, Retro Gamer decided to track down and talk to Trenz himself





Looking at these magnificent screenshots, it's hard to imagine that *Turrican* was running on a humble Commodore 64

IN THE KNOW



- » **PUBLISHER:** RAINBOW ARTS
- » **DEVELOPER:** MANFRED TRENZ
- » **RELEASED:** 1990
- » **GENRE:** RUN 'N' GUN
- » **EXPECT TO PAY:** £3+



Ask any Commodore 64 owner to name their top five favourite games and you can guarantee that Turrican will be on the shortlist.

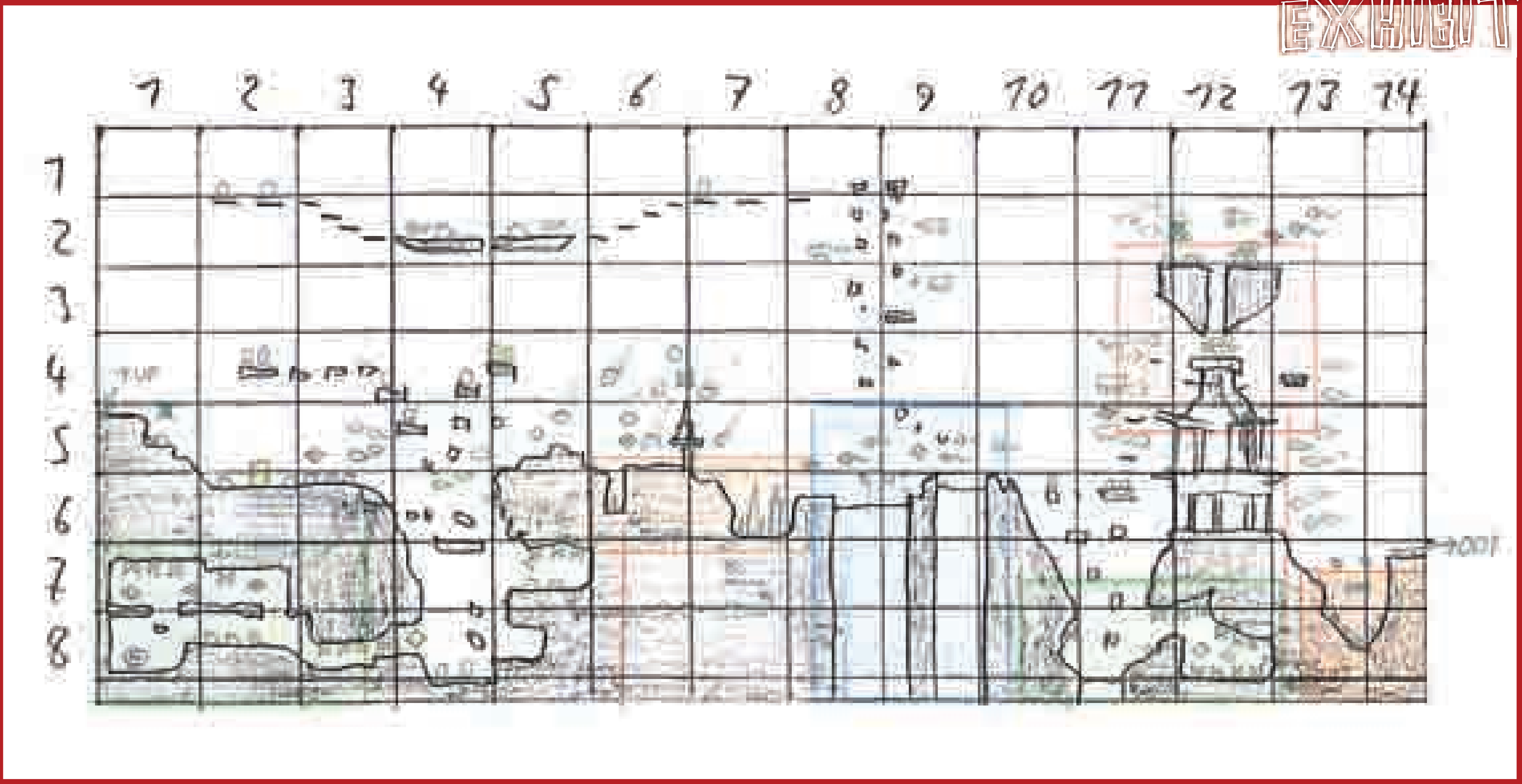
Released for the Commodore 64 in 1990 it was an immediate hit with critics and public alike thanks to its outrageously good visuals, outstanding sound and challenging gameplay – not bad for someone who'd only been in the industry for four years.

"I remember entering a graphic competition in 1986 for a German magazine called 64'er," explains Trenz, recalling his lucky break. I sent in some of my artwork and ended up coming third, which in my mind, was pretty good." Trenz had been initially introduced to the Vic20 in 1984 and had been so impressed by it that he eventually picked up a Commodore 64. Before long he started dabbling around in Basic and eventually created a simple single screen shooter where you took control of a helicopter. Frustrated with the lack of speed that Basic provided, the resourceful Trenz soon taught himself Assembly and started creating all sorts of short demos to impress his friends with.

While Trenz only managed to attain third place in the 64'er competition his talent hadn't

» Trenz was a stickler to detail and he painstakingly drew each level by hand, before actually desinging it. Here's just some of his handiwork…

EXHIBIT 1



"LIKE KATAKIS BEFORE IT I CAME UP WITH THE NAME BY SIMPLY FLICKING THROUGH THE LOCAL TELEPHONE DIRECTORY AND LANDING ON THE PRIVATE HOME NUMBER OF AN ITALIAN NAMED TURRICANO"

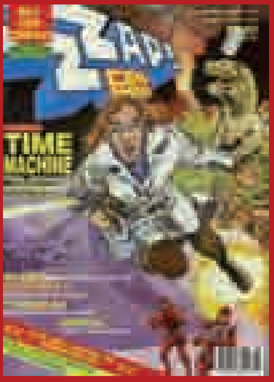
gone unnoticed. A small company called Rainbow Arts had been impressed with his entries and soon got into contact with the talented artist. "They asked me to do some graphics for their games, so I initially started working for them on a freelance basis," continues Trenz. "By 1987 I was asked to join the company on a permanent basis as its graphics artist; I readily agreed. Although at that time Rainbow Arts didn't realise I was a coder as well! My first in-house project was the wonderful *The Great Giana Sisters*, a title which I created the graphics and level design for."

Essentially a computer version of Nintendo's NES hit *Super Mario Bros*, *The Great Giana Sisters* managed to stay on the shelves for one week before Nintendo's lawyers had it pulled (much to the detriment of fans everywhere who claim it to be the better game). Trenz's next project however, not only remained on shelves, it defined his career, shot Rainbow Arts into the limelight and is still played by many gamers today.

While *Turrican* felt like a breath of fresh air on Commodore's 8-bit machine, it wasn't exactly a new concept – indeed, Trenz had borrowed ideas from a myriad of different titles, the most obscure being an old Data East arcade game that Trenz had been addicted to at his local Düsseldorf arcade. "I adored *Psycho-Nics-Oscar* as it had several new features that I'd never seen in a game before," explains Trenz. "It featured a heavily armoured hero that was jumping around and throwing around lots of weapons. At the time, nothing like it existed for the C64, so I decided to use it as the basis for what would eventually become *Turrican*. Even *Turrican's* name was 'borrowed' "like *Katakis* before it I came up with the name by simply flicking through the local telephone directory and landing on the private home number of an Italian named Turricano."

With all his ideas firmly in place, Trenz locked himself away and set to work; his goal was simple – create an 8-way, smoothly scrolling masterpiece. Although to be fair, *Turrican* was far from a solo effort. "It took me around nine full months to complete the C64 version," confirms Trenz. "I took care of all the graphics, design and coding, Chris Huelsbeck and Ramiro Vaca handled the music, while Adam Bulka was in charge of the game's sound effects." Considering the sheer scale of Trenz's ambition it was hardly surprising that Hurrican's (as it was originally known) development was a less than smooth process… "Creating *Turrican* certainly wasn't easy," confirms Trenz. "One of the biggest problems I encountered was the scrolling. I had to scroll all these colourful graphics in all directions without compromising the power of the CPU. I've no idea if what I was doing was the same as other coders, but when I did hit a snag, I always seemed to find a way to solve it."

And solve them he did; *Turrican* was graphically amazing and pulled off all sort of tricks that many thought were too difficult to achieve on the humble C64 – it was the first actual Commodore 64 title to feature 'true' parallax scrolling – and became an instant showpiece for when your less fortunate Spectrum and Amstrad owning mates turned up. *Turrican* was definitely a game to impress your mates with, but considering the sheer amount of effort Trenz had invested in it, it was never going to be anything less. Aware of his deadlines, Trenz had already created several graphics tools and had religiously played several titles to ensure that creating *Turrican's* applauded visuals caused as few problems as possible.



THEY SAID:

"ALL IN ALL, A HUGE GAME WHICH IS RECOMMENDED FOR ANYONE WANTING A TOP-NOTCH ARCADE BLAST."

ZZAP!64

THE MAKING OF…
TURRICAN



"I'VE LOST COUNT OF THE NUMEROUS REQUESTS TO REMAKE TURRICAN, ALTHOUGH UNFORTUNATELY, THE RIGHTS FOR THE GAME ARE NOW IN THE WRONG HANDS"

SO MANY SYSTEMS, SO LITTLE TIME

Such was the success of *Turrican* that it soon appeared on a variety of different computers and consoles, with the Super NES version being particularly enjoyable to play through. Interestingly, though, Trenz had hardly any involvement with most of the different conversions that existed and only actually worked on the C64, Amiga and NES versions of the game. "The only console version I ever actually worked on was *Super Turrican* for the NES," he explains. "Although if I'm totally honest about it, I was far from satisfied with the end product. Mainly because it lacked many of the gameplay elements of the earlier versions and didn't feature the same degree of difficulty. Unfortunately, development time was short and it had to be finished on time, so there was little I could do. . The other versions such as the SNES and Mega Drive games had nothing to do with me.



» There were plenty of obstacles to clear in *Turrican*, with many being just as dangerous as the enemies you faced

"Being able to create the graphics from my own tools was great," admits Trenz, "and enabled me to get some great results from the old C64. I was also impressed with the way that other games at the time were using additional colour information for 8X8 blocks, as it made a huge difference to the way they eventually looked. As for the actual level design, well it initially all started off with me designing them on paper. I still have the original copies," he proudly proclaims. "Once I had the basic design in place, I simply added everything else. As with the graphics, I created a special level editor to create each stage, as well as an objects editor for taking care of the *Turrican's* many enemies. If I'm totally honest, it was more fun than work to create the actual levels."

While much of *Turrican's* graphical look and level design came from Trenz's own imagination, he does admit to using several elements from the aforementioned *Psycho-Niks-Oscar* and Nintendo's excellent *Metroid*. *Turrican* certainly shares plenty of traits with Samus' first adventure, but where the bounty hunter had to make do with some fairly mundane-looking weapons, the power-ups that were available in *Turrican* were of a much greater calibre.

Few C64 owners will forget the delight of creating huge destructive waves of electricity with *Turrican's* amazing Lightning gun, but Trenz had even more exciting weapons planned, he just couldn't put them all in… "I had so many more great weapons in mind but the limitations of the C64 made it impossible to make them all a reality. For example, there was this great full screen laserbeam, but it proved to be too much for the Commodore64 to handle. The weapons you see in the final game are as good as could be for their time though. Even with the above restrictions *Turrican's* weapons were still a joy to use (and look at) and then you have those amazing bosses to you them on…

From the gigantic Piranha that spat out tinier fishes, to the huge metallic gauntlet. Each and every boss looked fantastic and was able to dish out tremendous amounts of damage to your one-man army. Like the game's outstanding visuals though, creating these impressive behemoths was far from straightforward… "Ah the bosses. They proved to be quite an issue at first," begins Trenz. "Because they were built out of so many sprites and multiplexed together avoiding flicker proved to be quite a problem for me. Still, I'd always been impressed with huge bosses in the many arcade games I had played, so I was desperate to include them in *Turrican*, and although many were my own creations, some were inspired by movies and other games. Take the metal fist for example; the idea originally came from Yellow Submarine. There's a scene in the movie when the Blue Meanies prepare to attack Pepperland with a huge blue fist. There's plenty more secrets I could share with you, but I'll save them for another time…"

Secrets aside, Trenz found numerous ways to solve most of the obstacles he encountered and when *Turrican* was eventually released, it immediately began earning rave reviews from everyone who was lucky enough to play it. Although Trenz himself admits to being totally surprised with the game's reception, "I really didn't expect it at all," he told us. Nevertheless, *Turrican* became an instant hit and an Amiga port (which had been started at the same time as the C64 game) quickly followed. Despite the higher hardware specifications, Trenz and the rest of the Amiga design team still encountered several problems… "The



» *Turrican* may have been a tough game, but there was plenty of replay value to it

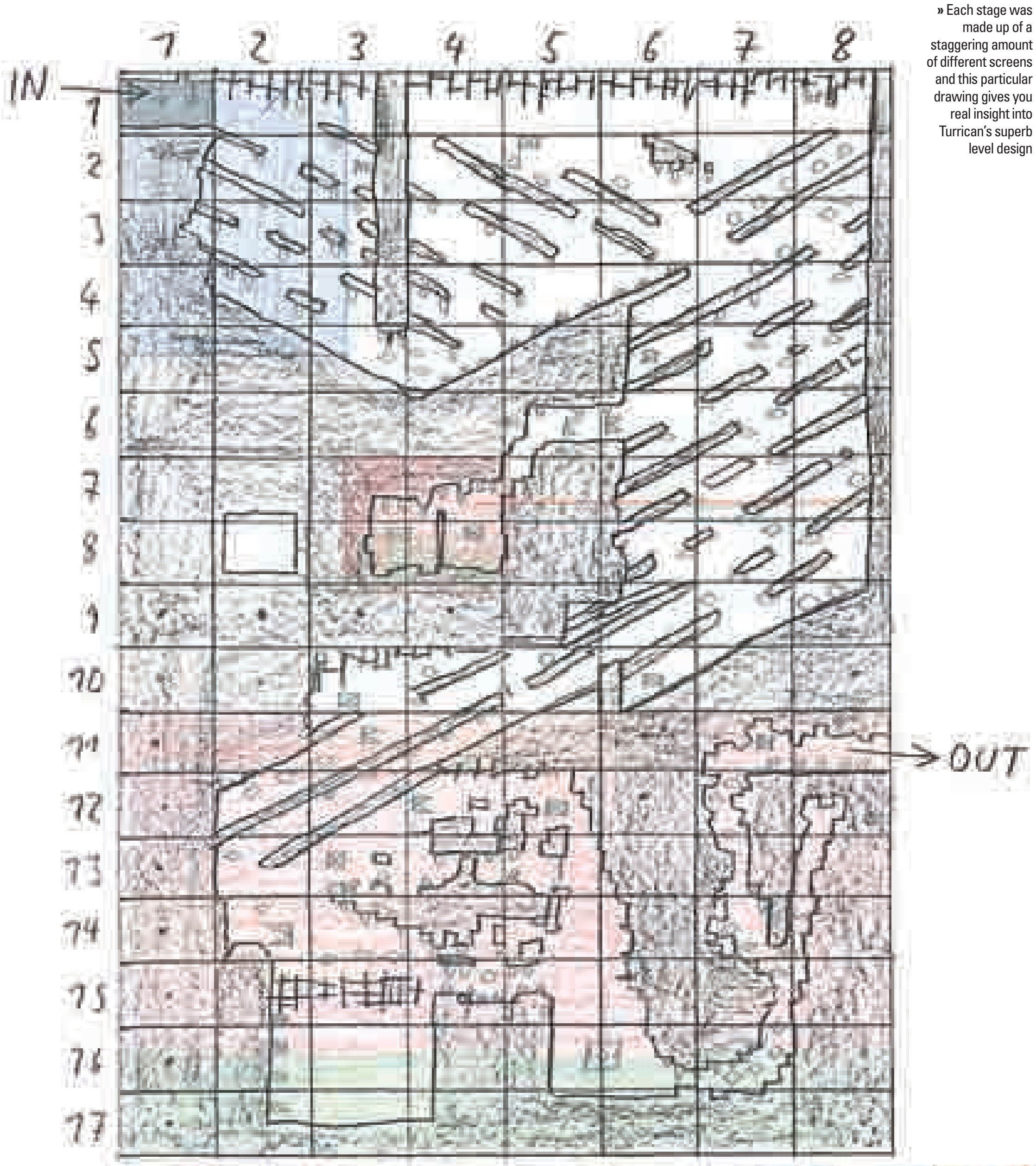


scrolling was the obvious difficulty," confirms Trenz. "Mainly because all the graphics had to be redrawn into bitmaps instead of tiles and had to be scrolled smoothly without stressing the CPU too much. Thanks to the impressive talents of programmer Holger Schmidt everything ended up working perfectly."

With the game being so well received, an inevitable sequel was soon requested. "There was a huge pressure on me, as the sequel had to be so much better," continues Trenz. "So many people had such high expectations for it. It wasn't easy, but I was eventually satisfied with the end results." He certainly must have been pleased with the end result as Trenz cites the C64 version of *Turrican 2* as his favourite game in the series, "it has all the great elements of the original game, great flying sections that are similar to *Katakis*, and of course much better weapons." Despite his obvious love for the sequel, Trenz still holds a special torch for the game that gave him worldwide laim, and is impressed with its endurance. "Even today people are regularly writing to me to say that they still play the game. I've also lost count of the numerous requests to remake it, although unfortunately, the rights for the game are now in the wrong hands. Still, it's certainly a great feeling to have created a title that considered by many as a milestone in the history of videogames."



OTHER GAMES IN THE SERIES:
Turrican 2: The Final Fight, Turrican 3, Super Turrican, Turrican 3D (cancelled), Universal Soldier



» Each stage was made up of a staggering amount of different screens and this particular drawing gives you real insight into Turrican's superb level design

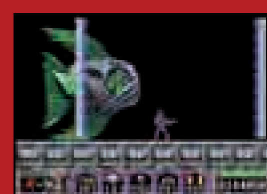
EXHIBIT 2

IF I COULD MAKE A NEW TURRICAN GAME…

"I think there's definitely room in the marketplace for a *Turrican* game today," begins Trenz when we started talking about resurrecting the franchise. "It's important to remember that *Turrican's* magic came from the classical 2D view. Putting it into the third dimension would change the game too much, and it wouldn't be the same. I know what I'm talking about, believe me."

Indeed, Trenz began work on a 3D version of *Turrican* in 2000 but the project was scrapped, Factor 5 (formed from the remnants of Rainbow Arts) has also tried on several attempts to bring the franchise up to date, but its *Thornado* project is now a distant memory. Despite this, Trenz feels that a *Turrican* game could still work.

"A good platform for a *Turrican* game would be the Game Boy Advance or Nintendo DS. Of course changes and design enhancements would need to be made in design and gameplay in order to meet today's requirements. One example would be a cooperative mode using the wireless technique on the DS to fight together against evil, although to be truthful the possibilities are endless."

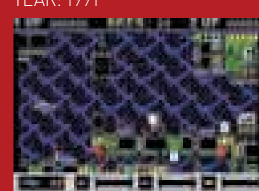


DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

KATAKIS
SYSTEMS: C64
YEAR: 1988

R-TYPE
SYSTEMS: C64
YEAR: 1988

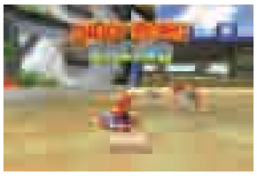
TURRICAN II: THE FINAL FIGHT
SYSTEMS: C64, AMIGA
YEAR: 1991



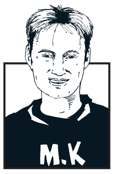


DIDDY KONG RACING

'NO, NO, NO! WRONG WAY...'



- **PUBLISHER** RARE
- **RELEASED:** 1997
- **GENRE:** DRIVING
- **FEATURED HARDWARE:** N64
- **EXPECT TO PAY:** £10+



HISTORY

Diddy Kong Racing to me is *the* perfect racing game. Now, before getting shot down by fans of 'new' racers such as *Project Gotham Racing 3*, I'm talking about a game that's utterly addictive to play, with super-responsive handling without the hassle of 'real world' controls and physics getting in the way. Plus it's cute enough that I can even happily play with my wife and it even keeps her attention!

Diddy Kong Racing's responsiveness just blows away *Mario Kart 64* in my opinion. Firstly, its controls are perfectly mapped to the beautifully ergonomic N64 pad. It has just the right amount of button options, saving it from the overwhelming amount of 'clever' combos needed to get the most from games that only someone with 32 fingers can handle these days. It's dead easy to get into, a snap to play and a feast on the eyes too.

Although you could argue that *Mario Kart 64* has the better two-player modes, the actual tracks themselves are far, far more rewarding, and as the game options stack up this is a much more satisfying racer. Ranging from simplistic *Mario*-esque tracks, the game then goes way off into themed realms, such as the utter genius of 'Frosty Village' and 'Cresent Bay'. Add to this the fact that each level can be played as a either a kart, plane or hovercraft and you start to appreciate the genius of Rare's level design. Plus, throw in the music 'inspired' from classic musical themes such as 'Winter Wonderland' and you can begin to see how this all stacks up as being a classic of epic proportions.

With a wealth of character racers, an adventure aspect to the game (complete with end of trophy baddy races), Time Trials, unlockable characters, secret areas and more, this racers reads like another *Banjo Kazooie* than a straight racing game. This is a classic, and no mistake.

Even today, the game holds more fun and adventure than any current console game. OK, part of any nostalgia is that you were there at the time, which could have something to do with it, but I would still urge anyone who gets the chance to give this racer a go. Believe me, once played *Diddy Kong Racing* is never forgotten. Thank you Rare for a true gem.



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DESERT ISLAND DISKS

WHAT CHERISHED GAMES WOULD YOU TAKE TO THE ISLAND?



WARREN DAVIS

DATAFILE

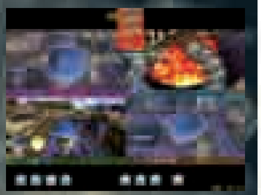
NAME: WARREN DAVIS
DATE OF BIRTH: "BEFORE THE MOON LANDINGS"
FIRST JOB: STOCK BOY AT LEATHER GOODS STORE
CURRENTLY: SENIOR SOFTWARE ENGINEER
FAVOURITE FILM: CASABLANCA

HE WAS THE MASTERMIND BEHIND ARCADE CLASSIC Q*BERT, PIONEERED DIGITISED GRAPHICS AT WILLIAMS, SHOT AEROSMITH AND WAS RECENTLY MURDERED BY RAPPER LL COOL J. WELCOME TO WARREN'S WORLD

YOU MUST PLAY...

Q*bert
An obvious choice, but the enduring charm of Warren's first title makes it an essential starting point. The simple premise of turning all the cubes on an artfully constructed pyramid to the required colour belie the deep strategies involved, particularly when later levels demand multiple colour changes – a stressful test when you're being pursued by a relentless coiled snake.

For a *Q*bert* master class, see next issue's High Score column.



Warren Davis is quite happy to tell us where his tale began, but deliberately vague on the exact date. When he confesses, though, that his first glimpse of a videogame was a clone of the daddy of them all, *Space War*, playing on an oscilloscope, you know he was there at the dawn of gaming. At his High School in Brooklyn, New York, he made some early stabs at programming on a crude, desk-size contraption, with a typewriter keyboard and flowing paper tape.

"My first thought even then was the potential for games," Warren recalls. "I was working on a program that would let you type things in and the computer would talk back to you, to simulate conversation. And I remember they had a horse racing game that made the sound of the trumpet fanfare at a racetrack by punching the tape rhythmically, which I just thought was genius."

Suitably inspired, Warren went on to study computer engineering and landed a job at Bell Laboratories after finishing college. He began as a travelling tester, working on each new iteration of the company's operator system, before moving into Voice Recognition research and development. Despite this being distinctly cutting edge in the late seventies, and Warren having upgraded his qualifications by gaining a Masters Degree in Electrical Engineering from Ohio State, he decided to make a somewhat unexpected career move.

"I quit Bell Labs, moved to Chicago and studied Improvisational Comedy. Hey, it looked like fun! I thought I'd forget all about being a software engineer, as I still didn't feel like I fitted in, plus I'd done acting in college and had got involved in local theatre groups when I'd been travelling around for Bell Labs. I did a one-year Improv course and then two years of Technique, but though I'd made up my mind to leave computing, I did secretly look at engineering jobs in the classifieds. I thought there was no harm in looking…"

And in 1981, an advert for a videogame programmer in the Chicago Tribune did intrigue Warren enough to send in an informal letter of application. The post was at Gottlieb, a well-established pinball manufacturer, who planned to move into the burgeoning and potentially lucrative videogames market. They'd already hired one of the stars of the seventies, Tim Skelly (featured in RG 18) and Warren's solid educational qualifications and unusual background in hardware and software, meant the company responded the next day. Soon, he was working on his first project, a superhero game that aimed to mirror the plot of the *Superman 2* movie, without actually infringing any costly copyright.

"You flew across a cityscape, battling against three super-villains, protecting civilians. It began as *Protector*, then *Videoman*, *Guardian* and for some reason *Argus*. We ended up calling it *Providguardargus* and I'm pretty sure it never got released."

Apart from providing a lesson in snappy titles, it also gave Warren his first taste of hard coding and encouraged him to experiment further with programming techniques.

"You weren't assigned anything," Warren recalls, wistfully. "They just said, 'Make a game'. The beauty back then was there were no rules. We were pioneers. We had these





» *Q*bert* being premiered at the 1982 AMOA show



» *Q*Bert* was originally titled @!#?@! Would a nose by any other name have smelt quite so sweet?

open offices and a big empty manufacturing plant ready to go. Our Vice President of Marketing, Howie Rubin, used to organise football games in there in the middle of the day. Just a great environment to work in – like a family doing fun stuff."

It was this unique atmosphere and the collaborative culture it engendered that led to Warren's most famous creation and Gottlieb's biggest hit. *Q*bert* evolved from a programming exercise in gravity and randomness. Warren had admired an Escher-like screen full of cubes produced by a fellow programmer and used them as the basis of the pyramid structure that became the playfield. He realised that if a ball fell onto a seven level pyramid, it could only fall in one of two directions, a binary choice, and thus he could determine the path of the object with a single byte.

Graphic artist Jeff Lee contributed the characters he'd produced for a game idea entitled Snots and Boogers, which explains the large snout Q*bert was endowed with, as this was originally intended as a cannon for nose debris. Then Dave Thiel added the sound, including an early example of speech synthesis, which he ingeniously used to produce the apparent obscenity uttered when your orange friend is caught by sending random numbers to the speech chip. Fellow technician Rick Tighe installed a pinball flicker inside the cabinet, which gave a sickening thud when poor Q*bert plunged from the pyramid. Even the title came out of a brainstorming meeting to name the bouncing main character – 'Hubert', which vaguely rhymed with 'cube', became 'Cubert', and one well-placed asterisk later, the moniker was set in stone.

"AT GOTTLIEB, YOU WEREN'T ASSIGNED ANYTHING. THEY JUST SAID, "MAKE A GAME". THE BEAUTY BACK THEN WAS THERE WERE NO RULES"

WARREN DAVIS

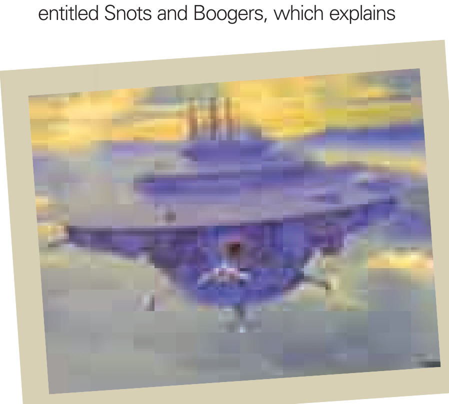
"I was the only programmer on the project, but I certainly see the development as a group effort," Warren acknowledges. "I could act as a filter for all these ideas, welcoming the good ones and saying no to the others. And a lot was based on my skill level at the time – I didn't want stuff in there that was too complicated! Jeff would ask me if I'd got the nose shooting yet, but I resisted that because shooting in pseudo 3D was going to be really hard to implement."

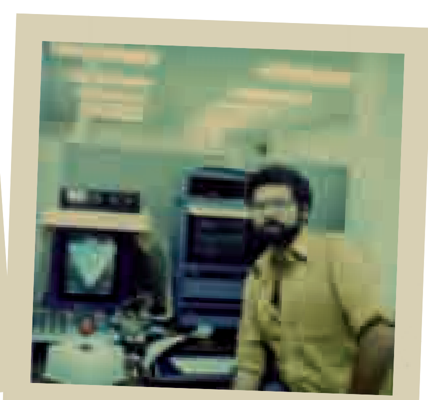
*Q*bert's* simplicity and charming attention to detail helped it become a huge success. 25,000 cabinets were sold, it spawned it's own Saturday Morning TV show and has appeared on countless platforms since its release in 1982. Yet Warren turned down the sequel, *Q*bert's Qubes* (which was taken on by Neil Bernstein, with Warren's blessing) and instead opted for something that was far more ambitious.

Us vs Them was a laser disc title that tried to take the genre beyond the memory test of *Dragon's Lair.* It mixed live action footage, co-directed and edited by Warren, with game sprites to create a varied flying shooter. Levels would switch between viewpoints – a third person airborne assault on alien attackers would be followed by a side scrolling traditional blast or a first-person forest flight à la *Return of the Jedi* – and each was introduced by a cinematic prologue featuring real actors.

"It was on test in an arcade and was number one for 12 weeks," Warren explains, with some pride. "People really liked the story element, which I think brought something new to the mix, but it was only ever marginally released. Laser disc games were really unreliable back then – especially when players smacked the side of the cabinet in anger."

If the innovative *Us vs Them* fell victim to erratic technology, it coincided with the whole industry being thrown into chaos by the Videogames Crash of 1984. Gottlieb closed their doors and Warren left the industry for several years, before being lured back in by Williams, also based in Chicago. He joined John Newcomer as a senior programmer on *Joust 2* before turning his attention to developing a videogame system that could up the number of colours from 32 to 256.





» **Left:** Sprites over film footage gave *Us vs Them* a striking look **Right:** The *Q*Bert* development set-up, complete with tupperware joystick [real pity this is such a fuzzy photo - its the only one he's got left of him from back then...]

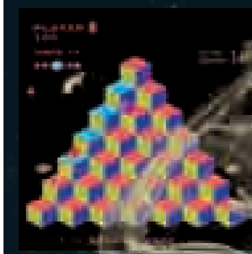
FHMC Q*BERT

"Everyone in the office thought *Q*bert* was too hard, so I kept slowing things down and making it easier. In the end I think I made it too easy. After it was released, we saw people getting huge scores and I realised I should have trusted my instincts."

Warren's belated response was to produce Faster Harder More Challenging *Q*Bert,* which did exactly what it said on the tin, plus introduced new character Q*bertha. It was ready just six months after the first version of the game, which was seen as too close to the original's release and for years the only copy of the code sat in Warren's *Q*bert* cabinet at home.

However, after being contacted by a fan in the nineties inquiring about the unreleased update, Warren decided to make it freely available for download through MAME.

"It just seemed a shame I was the only one who could play it."



» Warren Davis may have made *Q*bert* easy, but we're still crap at it…

DESERT ISLAND DISKS

WHAT CHERISHED GAMES WOULD YOU TAKE TO THE ISLAND?



» Ripping out hearts wouldn't have been the same without Warren's digitisation system



» *Exterminator* was the first game to solely use digitised graphics. And the last to feature a giant disembodied hand swatting insects

» Steve Tyler, loaded on wheatgrass juice, during the filming of *Revolution X*

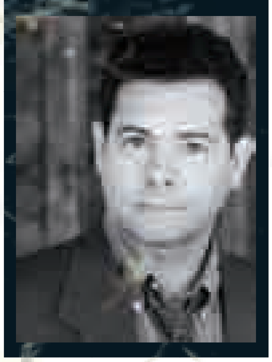


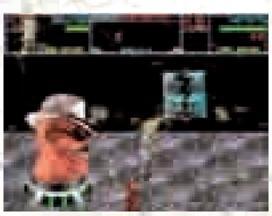
CH-CH-CHANGES

With a career in the games industry spanning three decades, we asked Warren to reflect on the changes he's welcomed and those that have left him cold.

"The technological advancements have been heartening to see. Almost everything we're seeing now, we knew would happen 20 years ago, but we just didn't know when. The huge improvements in graphics that can make the experience so much richer… I was dreaming of those cinematic techniques, like dramatic lighting and fog, in the early eighties and it's really wonderful to see them in games.

I'm not so thrilled about how corporate the industry has become. I realise growth brings certain inevitable changes, but there was a spirit back in the early days that seems missing from most companies now. Games are commodities. I don't want to sound all highty-toighty about the artistic side of videogames, but it's entertainment and when you entertain someone, that's magical. I think that sense of magic gets lost in the scheduling, the profit and loss accounting and just watching the bottom line."





» *NARC's* clear anti-drug message: Krak does your head in

"AEROSMITH BROUGHT A WONDERFUL ENERGY TO THE STUDIO. NO, IT WASN'T DRUGS. IT WAS ALL DONE ON WHEATGRASS JUICE"

WARREN DAVIS

The potential was clear to Warren.

"I realised with that many colours you could start to approach true video graphics and I began some pioneering work on video digitisation. It's the thing I'm most proud of from my time at Williams."

Warren's original system allowed a standard video recording to be paused and each frame digitised for use within a game. The first fruits of this ground-breaking, though at this stage slightly laborious method of motion capture, was *NARC*, the infamously brutal anti-drug law enforcement game he collaborated on with legendary designer Eugene Jarvis.

Though Warren then left Williams for several years, he didn't leave behind his interest in the use of digitised graphics. He rejoined what was left of Gottlieb, which had continued its pinball division and was once more venturing into videogames, and produced the esoteric *Exterminator*. The game involved controlling a human hand charged with ridding a house of insect infestation through grabbing, swatting and crushing the pests. The unusual theme and dedicated cabinet, which boasted a unique rotary joystick, sadly found little favour with conservative arcade owners and only 250 units were sold. It was the last game released under the Gottlieb banner.

For the second time Warren got the call from Williams, who needed help completing its *Terminator 2* arcade game. Warren stayed and spent much of the early nineties refining his digitising software. Now, actors could be filmed directly and their digitised images could be in the computer's memory within minutes. The revolutionary system facilitated a new realism in game graphics, as seen in the *Mortal Kombat* series, and virtually all of Williams output since. It also allowed the notoriously debauched rockers Aerosmith to star in their own game, *Revolution X*.

"We had a blue screen studio by then and had the band in for two 13-hour days. They were totally at our disposal and we could throw them up on stage and tell them to do whatever. They were great – really excited and had this wonderful energy."

Given the band's reputation for snorting Colombia dry on a regular basis, we can't help wondering if that energy had a chemical source. "Actually they were clean at that point and into health kicks," Warren corrects me. "Really into wheatgrass juice."

By 1996, Warren could see little future in the arcade industry and decided the home market seemed a more attractive proposition. His move to LA to join Disney Interactive,



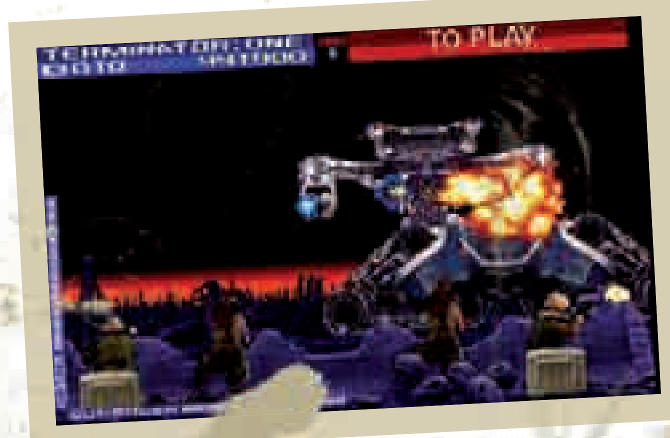
» Warren's appearance in 'House' proved guns don't kill people, rappers do…

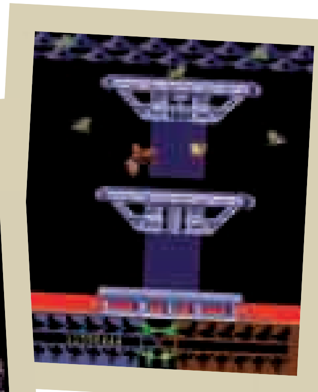
where he stayed for four years, before leaving to work on *Spyro 4* amongst other projects, wasn't only prompted by changes in the games industry.

"I was partially motivated by my acting career – there's a lot more TV and film work in California than Chicago. I'd continued acting throughout my time as a programmer and the two have always co-existed in my life"

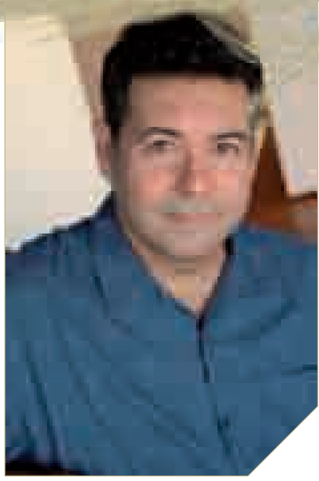
And Warren's still looking up at the stars. He's currently working for Virtue Arts on the soon to be released edutainment package *The Lunar Explorer*, which allows players to take a virtual tour of the moon, plus he's appeared in *ER*, *Criminal Minds* and *House*.

"My appearances are usually very brief,' he modestly qualifies. "I sometimes get a good scene though. If you see Season 2, Episode 1 of *House*, it begins with LL Cool J as a prisoner being haunted by apparitions of his victims. And I'm one of them!"





» Twice Williams called on Warren to get them out of a tight programming spot

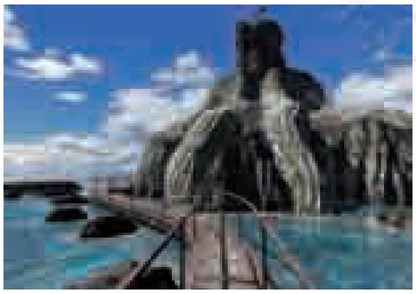


WARREN DAVIS DESERT ISLAND DISKS



INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE PC

1 "If I'm stuck on a desert island, the first order of business is going to be finishing those games that I started and wanted to finish, but got distracted for one reason or another. *Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine* would top that list. It's a great combination of story, puzzle solving and reflex."



RIVEN PC

2 "Another game I never finished. I loved *Myst* and came very close to finishing *Riven*, but didn't. After all this time, I'd have to go back and start it from the beginning. I love the way you can really get immersed in this world."



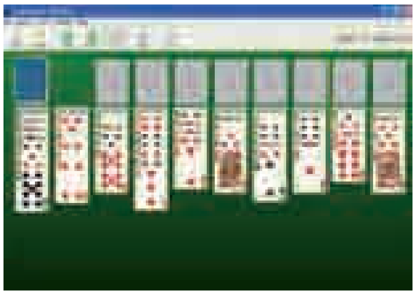
HITCH HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY PC

3 "I would have to take one text adventure with me and this would be it. I was a big fan of many of Infocom's games, but I really thought this one stood out. I loved the humour and the puzzles, which were challenging but fun. I was a big fan of the books, which helped."



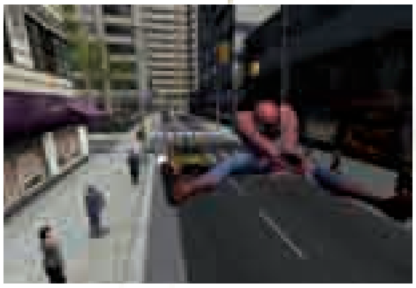
THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE PC

4 "This was a Tex Murphy game, who was a character in a number of games in the nineties. I loved how it combined elements of action and adventure games. It had a story, characters, and really let you explore. It was everything I thought a game should be and I admire it tremendously."



SPIDER SOLITARE PC

5 "Perfect for a nice, quick and easy diversion. If you just want to get your mind off things, to me, there's nothing like it. It's a great time waster."



SPIDER-MAN 2 PS2

6 "My kids were playing it and I picked it up. I was always a comic book fan, and although I was more of a DC guy than a Marvel guy, I still liked Spider-Man. This was a nice translation of the character into a videogame."



RESIDENT EVIL PS1

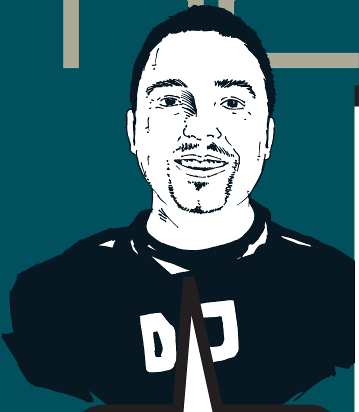
7 "I love horror games. In fact, I pitched a horror themed arcade game to Williams right after I'd done *Revolution X*. It had a pseudo 3D effect, so you could go through doors and navigate mazes. They passed on it, but a few years later, *House of the Dead* came out and was a smash hit. It was really similar to what I'd wanted to do…"



RIDGE RACER ARCADE

8 "I would definitely want a racing game if I was stuck on a desert island, and I always liked the feel of this one. I don't like the controls on a lot of driving games – the cars feel slippery."

RETRORATED



Microsoft's new machine has only been out for a few months, but amazingly, one of its main highlights isn't all the next-generation games that are available, but the excellent Xbox Live Arcade. With so many of the games playing exactly like those of old, we felt it was appropriate to feature some of the best that are currently on offer.

GEOMETRY WARS: RETRO EVOLVED

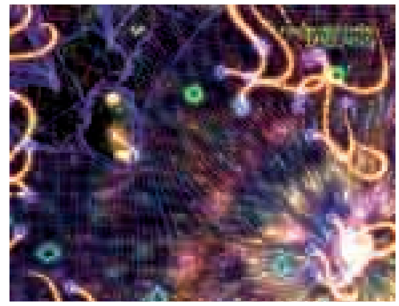
INFORMATION

- **PUBLISHER:** MICROSOFT
- **DEVELOPER:** BIZARRE CREATIONS
- **MARKET POINTS COST.** 400 POINTS

Fans of Eugene Jarvis' Robotron: 2084 will be instantly at home with this vastly superior update (the original of which is also included).

The aim of the game is simplicity in itself – avoid the continual assault of enemies and survive as long as possible. Your tiny craft is steered with the left analogue stick, while the right takes care of your firing; when the screen gets too crowded, a press of either trigger will activate a devastating smart bomb that annihilates everything.

Geometry Wars is wonderfully simple to control, it looks incredible and as the game progresses the screen literally explodes in a kaleidoscope of colour. It's also gets very tough, very quickly and requires plenty of practice in order to achieve a decent ranking on the leader boards. In fact, its only real faults are the monotonous music and lack of online play. It's still a damn good rush though.



» Don't be fooled by the orgy of colours, this is nothing more than *Robotron* for a new generation

OVERALL 85%

SMASH TV

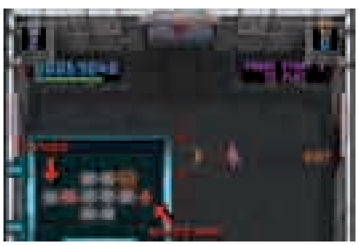
INFORMATION

- **PUBLISHER:** MIDWAY
- **DEVELOPER:** DIGITAL ECLIPSE
- **MARKET POINTS COST.** 400 POINTS

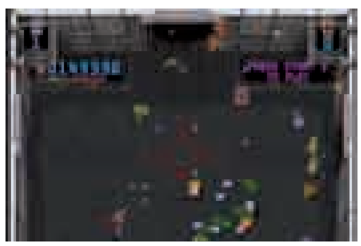
Eugene Jarvis' spiritual successor to Robotron: 2084 makes it to Microsoft's 360 and remains as enjoyable as ever. Like Robotron before it (and several other titles on Xbox Live Arcade) one analogue stick is used for movement, while the other handles your firepower. Unlike Jarvis' 1982 classic however, Smash TV gives you access to a variety of different weapons and presents you with huge bosses to fight at the end of each stage and has its tongue placed firmly in its cheek.

While it's possible to enjoy Smash TV on Xbox Live, we constantly found ourselves being thrown back to the lobby for no good reason whatsoever. A real shame, as the co-op is tremendous fun when it does decide to work and really adds to *Smash TV's* longevity. If only Midway hadn't made the odd decision to provide you with infinite continues…

OVERALL 71%



» Clear the first level and this handy map appears and shows you all the important rooms and bosses



» While *Smash TV* started off slowly; you were soon assailed by wave after wave of relentless enemies. Eek!





» If you're looking for a shooter with lots of depth you can't go wrong with *Mutant Storm Reloaded*

MUTANT STORM RELOADED

INFORMATION

- **PUBLISHER:** MICROSOFT
- **DEVELOPER:** POMPOM GAMES
- **MARKET POINTS COST.** 800 POINTS

A first look at Mutant Storm Reloaded suggests it's no different to Geometry Wars: Retro Evolved; play a few games however and you realise it offers an awful lot more.

Unlike *Geometry Wars*, which continually assaults you with increasing numbers of enemies, *Mutant Storm* takes place over a variety of single screens. The goal however is exactly the same – clear each level before moving on to the next. Mutant Storm also offers plenty of extras. There's the ability to play a variety of multi-player modes (both on and offline), some freakishly trippy visuals to gawk at and a selection of tough bosses. Granted, it costs twice as much as *Geometry Wars*, but the sheer amount of extras on offer definitely makes up for it.

OVERALL 87%



JOUST

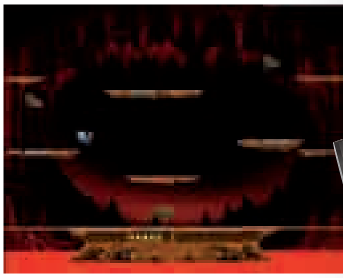
INFORMATION

» **PUBLISHER:** MIDWAY
» **DEVELOPER:** DIGITAL ECLIPSE
» **MARKET POINTS COST.** 400 POINTS

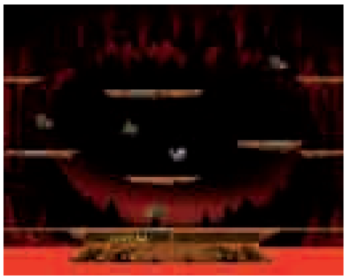
As with Smash TV, Robotron: 2084 and Gauntlet, Joust offers (ever so slightly) re-jigged visuals, a smattering of different play modes and – most importantly) the ability to play online.

New players may be put off by the sheer difficulty that the game offers (it takes a while to get used to your flying ostrich) but regulars will instantly be at home, especially as you can enable the Pterodactyl bug and revert to the visuals of the original. *Joust* may be another simple concept – fly around the screen and knock the other jousters off their rides – but its sheer difficulty means that non-fans may be forced look elsewhere for a challenge.

OVERALL **70%**



» Don't worry if *Joust* looks better than you remember it, it's simply had a hi-res facelift. All the classic gameplay is still intact, so what are you waiting for?



» Don't like the high-resolution visuals? Then simply turn them off for a more classic look

ROBOTRON 2084

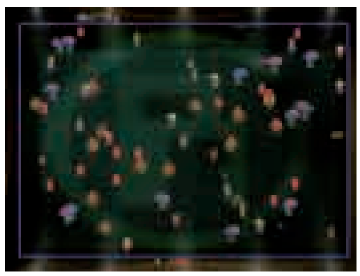
INFORMATION

» **PUBLISHER:** MIDWAY
» **DEVELOPER:** DIGITAL ECLIPSE
» **MARKET POINTS COST.** 400 POINTS

In our minds, Robotron is one of the greatest arcade games ever made, so we were ecstatic to find it as a download on Xbox Live Arcade. While some will no doubt be put off by the hi-res visuals (although to be fair, they are extremely reminiscent of the original's), the classic gameplay is as good as ever and you'll soon find yourself a slave to the game's many score boards.

Perhaps the most enjoyable aspect of the Xbox Live incarnation is that it's now possible to play with a second player. Co-op sees you taking it in turns to either control movement or firepower, while the Verses mode requires you to score as many points as possible before you or your opponent dies. While the Co-op is only good for a few players, the new Verses mode offers plenty of longevity.

OVERALL **81%**



» The more women you rescue, the more points you'll receive, and subsequently, more extra lives



» While the hi-res design of *Robotron* will appeal to some, we found it far too distracting for our ageing eyes

BANKSHOT BILLIARDS 2

INFORMATION

» **PUBLISHER:** MICROSOFT
» **DEVELOPER:** PIXELSTORM
» **MARKET POINTS COST.** 1200 POINTS

The first thing you'll notice about Bankshot Billiards 2 is that it's bloody expensive – 1200 points in fact. The second is that it's effectively a remake of Team 17's classic Amiga game Arcade Pool.

This in itself is no bad thing as *Arcade Pool* was a fantastic way to while away the hours, and the introduction of Xbox Live makes Pixel Storm's new game even more appealing to the budding pool shark. While it has one of the most expensive price tags out of all the current Xbox Live Arcade games, it's easily justified by the sheer amount of content that's on offer. There's a wealth of different pool variations to choose from, very realistic ball physics and even multi-player games like golf, time trials and trick shots. It's a wonderfully comprehensive package and gives a good indication of what future Xbox Live Arcade games will offer.

OVERALL **89%**



» Fans of the Amiga's *Arcade Pool* will be instantly at home with *Bankshot Billiards 2*



» While there are loads of different games to choose from, we prefer good old fashioned Euro-9 Ball



GAUNTLET

INFORMATION

» **PUBLISHER:** MIDWAY
» **DEVELOPER:** DIGITAL ECLIPSE
» **MARKET POINTS COST.** 400 POINTS

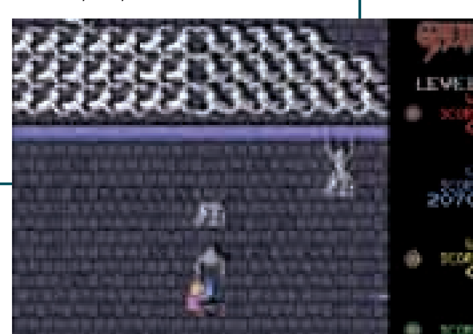
Gauntlet was never a great single-player experience – there, we've said it. However, once you added two to three other players into the equation it delivered an experience that was unmatched by any other arcade game – well, at least until Gauntlet 2 arrived…

Xbox Live faithfully recreates the joy of playing with your mates in your local arcade, except now you can do it in your own home whenever you want. Online play is stable and there are always plenty of gamers wanting to join in a game (something the other three Midway titles cannot guarantee). What online *Gauntlet* does very well is to force players to co-operate to clear each dungeon. Due to its toughness, lives are inevitably lost on a regular basis, but as long as one person survives the stage everyone else will be revived. It's a great little addition that makes *Gauntlet* a real joy to play. Just stay away from the pointless single-player experience that grants you infinite health.

OVERALL **76%**



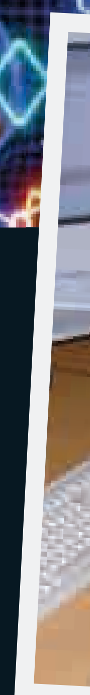
» Wait for long enough and all the walls will turn into exits. Very handy





GEOMETRY LESSON

A LIVE ARCADE PHENOMENON, GEOMETRY WARS HAS BEEN HERALDED BY SOME AS ONE OF THE BEST LAUNCH TITLES FOR THE XBOX 360. WE SAT DOWN WITH BIZARRE CREATOR STEPHEN CAKEBREAD…



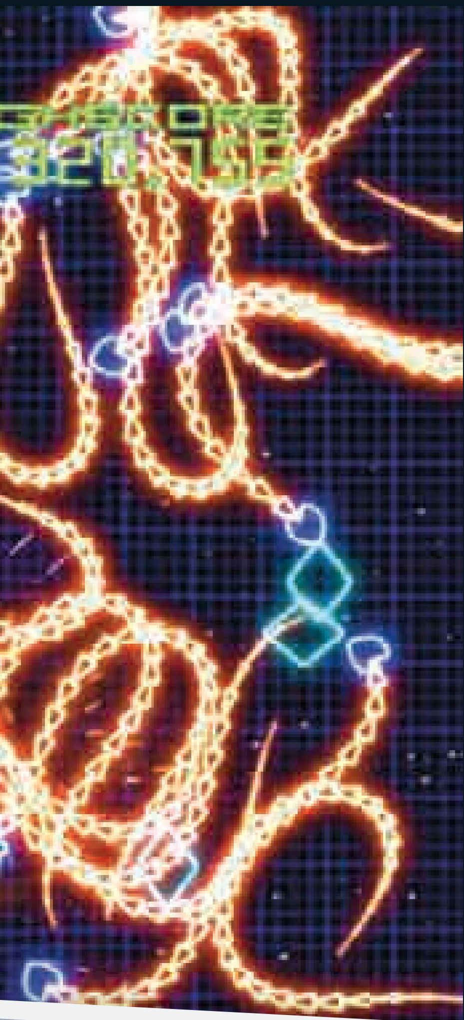
The Live Arcade is retro heaven. Within minutes you can have access to yesteryear giants like *Gauntlet, Robotron* and *SmashTV.* Games that quite rightly became best sellers in their time. But what is the most downloaded Live Arcade title to date? It's not one of these cult classics… It's the newly developed, incredibly addictive, awesome assault on the senses that is *Geometry Wars 2: Retro Evolved.*

Not bad for something that initially started out as a hobby for creator Stephen 'Cakey' Cakebread: "I worked on the first game over the course of a year, whenever I had a new idea. I had no overall plan for it; I was just making a game I could waste five minutes on occasionally. For *PGR2,* they wanted an Easter egg, and *Geometry Wars* was quite popular with some members of the team already, so they asked if I'd like to tart it up a bit and drop it in. I never thought it would have been so popular."

In fact it became such a success that Bizarre Creations gave Cakey time out from his Gotham duties to work on a sequel. This was the main reason the final product wasn't given away for free with *PGR3*: "For us it wasn't really a decision about releasing on Live Arcade, it was the decision about whether we were making a game, or an Easter egg. If we'd gone for the latter, I'd have had a week max to work on it, which would never have been enough time to do it justice… So instead we made the call to spend three months developing a full game, and given the result, I'm hoping the fans will support our decision."

If anyone doesn't agree, well… what more could you want for under a fiver? This is kind of the whole point of Xbox Live in the first place. "It's great to see Live Arcade getting all this attention. It's giving us options we never had in the past: a powerful well defined platform, an easy installation and distribution method, and because the games are smaller, we can self-fund, avoiding the need to find a publisher for the title, which is usually quite difficult for a smaller console game. Also the price scaling is great. We didn't want people to have to pay loads for a game like this, and the payment system gives the developer great freedom on how they choose to charge."

And rightly so; to be honest, we'd have happily forked out a tenner to play. This is a massive step up from the original. It's also the most visually impressive game running on Live Arcade right now; it's Fantavision on acid. " We knew the game had to look the part this time around, but I wanted it to remain as true to the original's graphical style as possible. The actual code which makes the explosions didn't change that much, it just spawns a lot more particles using a nicer set of colours, so they feel a lot hotter, especially with the



» These annoying blue waves are amongst the hardest to clear. Kill them without a smart to prove your manhood

"THE MOST VISUALLY IMPRESSIVE GAME RUNNING ON LIVE ARCADE RIGHT NOW; IT'S FANTAVISION ON ACID…"



» Designer Stephen Cakebread grew up playing *Repton*, *Rainbow Islands* and *Doom*

glow. They're still just lines! The grid grew from the scrollable play area, I needed some way of indicating to the player that they were moving, and… Well, it was just crying out to be made dynamic."

Believe it or not, virtually everything you're seeing on the screen is made up of polygons and not 2D sprites. This allowed Cakey to keep everything crisp on a 720p HDTV and gave a lot more flexibility on the warping of objects. When everything starts kicking off and the play area fills with enemies/black holes, it's a beautiful sight to behold. Making sense of this chaos was not easy: "The biggest headache was making sure the game was visible on top of all the particle effects and the grid. I'm still not totally happy with my solution, but I'm probably the only one who notices it!"

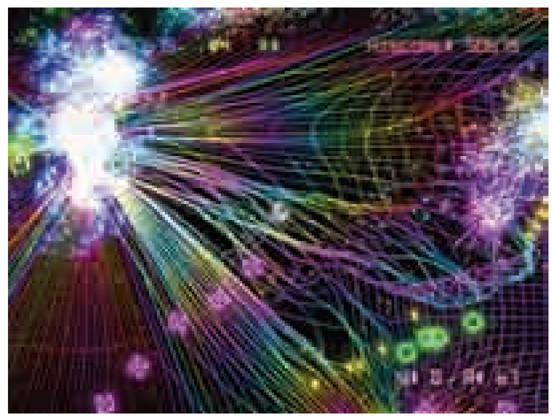
It didn't come as a surprise to learn that the visuals had to be toned down along the way to make sense of the technicolour chaos. Which is a good job really, after playing it for hours on end in our office we developed what could only be described as the *Geometry Wars* stare. Having been subjected to all versions for three months solid we asked Cakey if his eyes had been damaged for life? "My eyes are fine, but after listening to the audio team pump synthesiser noises out of their 5.1 surround systems while coming up with the sound effects for Retro Evolved, I think my ears will never work properly again!"

"We had a bit of rivalry going on in the office, not as much as there was for the original game, as this time around I was tweaking the scoring a lot, so it was difficult to compare scores from day to day. But, there's also been some rivalry going on at Microsoft on this one too. There's no actual limit to the score, but I would be surprised if people score more than 5 million, then again, I didn't expect people to score more than 1 million on the original, so I expect to be proven wrong!"

A challenge if ever there was one. However, don't expect any competition from Bizarre on the leader board. He may have built the game, but Cakey is the first to admit he's not the best: "Given some of the scores people have been posting on the original *Geometry Wars* I doubt I'm going to be able to rank in the top ten. There are some insanely good players out there." Besides which he's too busy racking his brains over the next instalment: "I still haven't decided where I'd like to take *Geometry Wars* next, it's a difficult game to extend because of how chaotic it is. I would like to do some multi-player modes next time around though, so expect those to appear if I do get to do a sequel." All we can say to that is, f*ck yes, that day can't come soon enough.

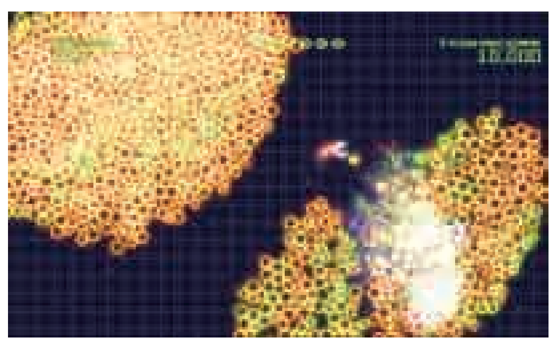
EVOLUTION

DURING THE VARIOUS DEVELOPMENT STAGES OF RETRO EVOLVED SOME FEATURES HAD TO BE CUT. NOT BECAUSE OF TIME OR CONSOLE LIMITATIONS (AS IS THE CASE WITH OTHER GAMES), BUT BECAUSE THEY MADE THE GAME UNPLAYABLE…



COLOUR GRID

"There was a constant balancing act between trying to make the game as pretty as possible, while making sure you could actually see what on earth was going on! One effect I cut from the game, because it was too extreme, made the grid change colour as it warped; very pretty, but you couldn't see a blooming thing!"



BACTERIA ENEMY

"One enemy I cut was a bacteria. It would multiply and stick together, gradually filling up the play area; you had to kill it before you were swamped under thousands of them! It was way too easy to leave one while you were dealing with everything else, then ten seconds later you'd have a wall of them advancing on you."

RETRORATED

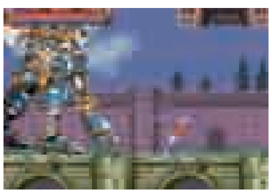
» TWICE THE TERROR, HALF THE PRICE

CASTLEVANIA DOUBLE PACK

DOUBLE THE DELIGHT



- » **SYSTEM:** GAME BOY ADVANCE
- » **PRICE:** £29.99
- » **RELEASED:** 17 FEBRUARY
- » **PUBLISHER:** KONAMI
- » **DEVELOPER:** IN-HOUSE
- » **PLAYERS:** 1
- » **FEATURED GAMES: CASTLEVANIA: HARMONY OF DISSONANCE, CASTLEVANIA: ARIA OF SORROW**





THQ has already found great success by repackaging two older Game Boy Advance titles on a spanking new cart and now Konami has followed suit with an amazing Castlevania set.

The *Castlevania Double Pack* features both *Harmony Of Dissonance* and the excellent *Aria Of Sorrow* (as featured in last month's Retro Roundup). Not only are both games absolutely cracking, if you hang around on eBay you'll know that each cartridge can often cost more than £30, so this generous pack is already saving you a pretty penny. While *Castlevania: Harmony Of Dissonance* is definitely the weaker of the two titles, it still stands head and shoulders over other similar games and deserves your attention.



» No *Castlevania* game would be complete without a selection of bats and skeletons to kill



» Don't be fooled by the location. This is a far from pleasant boat ride

Granted, it's no *Symphony Of The Night* but it's pleasing to see that it does share some of the same elements that made the PlayStation classic so enjoyable. There's a fairly simplistic RPG system in place, many of the monsters are instantly familiar and even the start of the game echoes Alucard's *Symphony Of The Night* entrance. Dracula's castle takes an absolute age to explore and once you near the end of your quest (and in another nod to *SOTN*) you find out that you're not as near to completing it as you first thought. With its slick-looking visuals, tight controls and decent (for the GBA at least) sound, Harmony of Dissonance is a wonderful appetiser to this double pack's main course. Now that it's bundled with HOD, you can easily see the many improvements that Konami added to *Aria Of Sorrow*. There's a staggering array of different weaponry to choose from, the graphics have been suitably spruced up, the level design is more rewarding and the boss fights more memorable. Indeed, the only problem it has (a fault that's also shared by *HOD*) is that you often have to level up a few times before you stand a decent chance against the later bosses. It's a minor niggle though and you're still effectively getting two superb games for the price of one. Now you can't argue with that…



OPINION

This is fantastic value for money, as both games separately will cost you a small fortune on eBay. While *Harmony Of Dissonance* is a decent title, the real jewel here is *Aria Of Sorrow*. I missed it the first time around (and refuse to pay current eBay prices) so this is like manna from heaven for me. It's unclear what future double packs Konami will be releasing (if any), so how about *Castlevania: Circle Of The Moon* and *Super Castlevania IV*? I'd buy it…

Dan Curley



OPINION

I'm a huge fan of the *Castlevania* series, so I'm as pleased as punch with this new GBA cartridge. I actually prefer *Harmony Of Dissonance* at the moment, as it shares a lot more similarities with the amazing *Symphony Of The Night*, but there's no denying that *Aria Of Sorrow* is the superior product. It would have been nice if *Circle Of The Moon* was included, but hey, you can't have everything.

Damian Butt

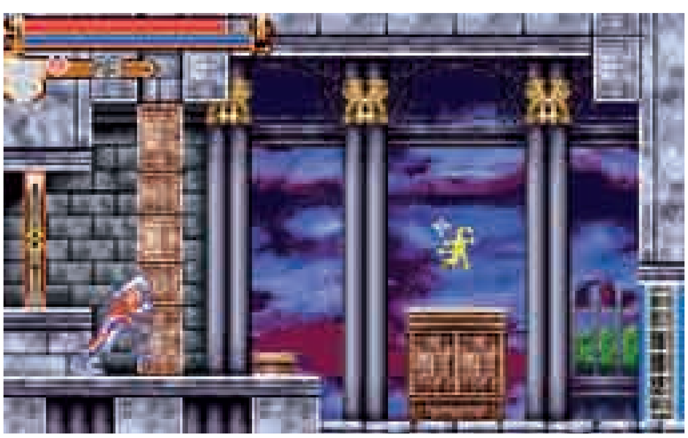
IN SUMMARY

Two great *Castlevania* games for the price of one… That's certainly good money in our books. If you've been tempted by both titles in the past, now's your chance to finally pick them up. Hell, even if you already have one it's still worth buying.

RATING **94%**



» By killing monsters, you unleash their souls. Very handy as they become weapons that you can then use





» You meet Death quite a few times in H*armony Of Dissonance*. Luckily, you don't fight him… yet…

SPACE HARRIER: COMPLETE COLLECTION

WE'RE OFF TO THE FANTASY ZONE...



- » **SYSTEM:** PLAYSTATION 2
- » **PRICE:** 2,758 YEN (£13.60) DELUXE VERSION 10,180 YEN (£50)
- » **RELEASED:** OUT NOW
- » **PUBLISHER:** SEGA
- » **DEVELOPER:** IN-HOUSE
- » **PLAYERS:** 1
- » **FEATURED GAMES:** SPACE HARRIER (ARCADE, MASTER SYSTEM, GAME GEAR) SPACE HARRIER II, SPACE HARRIER 3D



Sega's Sega Ages range has had a somewhat chequered history since it was launched towards the beginning of 2003. While Sega's dream of remaking its games with the enhanced power of the PS2 was perfectly sound, the end results were often a far cry from the originals.

Although it's taken nearly two years, Sega is finally learning from past mistakes and is now releasing what many gamers wanted in the first place – the original arcade games in all their glory.

True to form, Sega's first new release is quite special. Granted, it's not exactly heavy on content (just five games are included), but there's a wealth of options, glorious presentation and even the ability to make your very own 3D glasses for *Space Harrier 3D* – what more could you want?

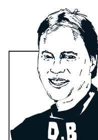
Of course, the main highlight is an excellent port of the original *Space Harrier*. Even after 21 years the arcade hit remains a tremendous blaster thanks to its incredibly slick visuals, kinetic gameplay and its glorious pounding soundtrack that really gets the adrenalin going. Less impressive are the two console ports that have also been included in the pack.



While the Master System outing is quite a decent effort, especially when you consider the limitations of the machine, the Game Gear version doesn't fare as well. While it features plenty of new attack patterns and enemies, the Game Gear's tiny screen means that everything is far too crowded and as a result you'll constantly find yourself getting hit because of the cramped conditions.

More enjoyable is the Mega Drive's *Space Harrier II*. Again, it lacks the speed of the original arcade game, but it features impressive-looking sprites, great bosses and typically strong audio. *Space Harrier 3D* is another strong effort and features some fantastic tunes, and of course, 3D visuals that actually work quite well.

While this compilation is far from definitive (no computer versions are included and a few console ports from non-Sega machines have been missed) this is still a strong start to Sega's new range.



OPINION

While the basic package is reasonably priced, only the biggest Space Harrier nut is going to splash out around £50 on the deluxe version, even if it does come with proper 3D glasses and a nice CD soundtrack.

While it would have been nice to include every single version, it's easy to see why Sega has stuck to its own consoles (it wouldn't want everyone knowing the PC Engine version is better than the Master System's…)

Damian Butt

IN SUMMARY

Space Harrier fans will lap this fine compilation up, but at such a cheap price even newcomers should investigate. It's obvious that the whole package has been put together with a lot of love, so let's hope the upcoming Treasure pack gets the same treatment.

RATING **76%**



OPINION

Where the hell is *Planet Harriers?* I loved that game in the arcades, and when the Dreamcast version was canned, I was devastated. I was hoping that this would have been the definitive collection, but alas, it's not to be.

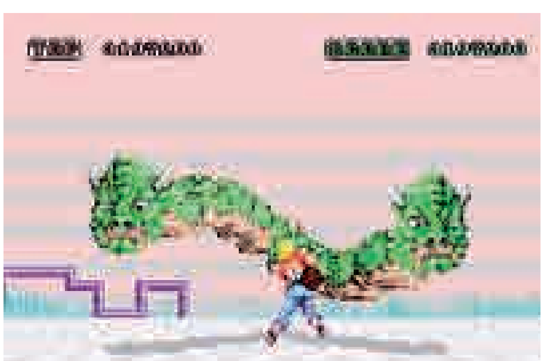
Luckily, four of out the five games included are still great to play and there's a staggering amount of options included as well. A great start to the New Year.

Dan Curley





» **Below left:** Get used to the death animation, as you'll be seeing it quite a lot… **Below right:** Some of the bosses still look fantastic; check out this flaming monstrosity



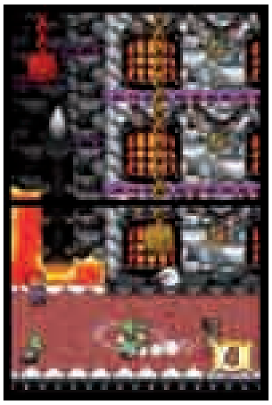
» The original and still the best. If you've never been lucky enough to play this in the arcades, you haven't lived



» This is only level four and things are already hotting up – you'll need the reflexes of a hyperactive cat if you want to reach the last stage

MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME

TWO MARIOS AND TWO LUIGIS = LOTS OF FUN



- » **SYSTEM:** NINTENDO DS
- » **PRICE:** £34.99
- » **RELEASED:** 10 FEBRUARY
- » **PUBLISHER:** NINTENDO
- » **DEVELOPER:** ALPHADREAM
- » **PLAYERS:** 1

» It's possible to team up and discover all sorts of handy abilities. Perfect for crossing dangerous obstacles



All hail the Nintendo DS – it's the saviour of 2D gaming and has delivered a fresh new experience for gamers since arriving in the UK. This latest gem from Alphadream may not utilise the machine's unique abilities to any great extent, but it does deliver a thoroughly absorbing adventure that will keep you gripped for the 20-odd hours it takes to complete.

Anyone that has played the N64's *Paper Mario* or the original *Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga* on Nintendo's Game Boy Advance will know exactly what to expect, as this sequel delivers more of the same.

After using a time machine, Princess Peach gets captured by a group of nasty aliens called Shroobs. Mario and Luigi travel back in time in hot pursuit and soon bump into baby versions of themselves. Teaming up with the infants, the four heroes travel backwards and forwards through time in an effort to rescue Peach and defeat the evil menace that's threatening the Mushroom Kingdom.

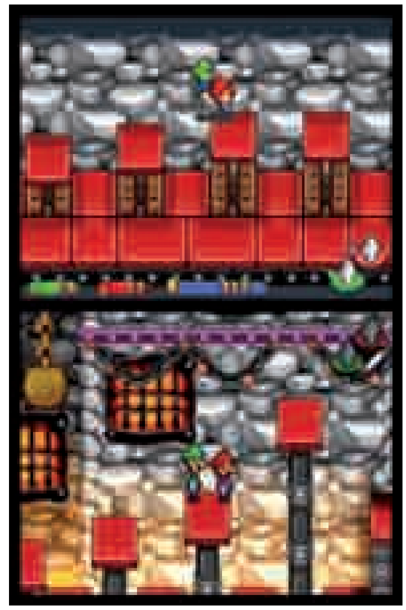
While *Partners In Time* is a fairly linear RPG, it's filled with plenty of humour, makes great use of the two sets of heroes and has an amazingly simplistic combat system that's a real joy to use. Each hero is assigned to one of the DS's four face buttons and it's simply a case of pressing their buttons at the correct time to launch into a variety of attacks and blocks. It's even possible to team up with the babies to create even stronger attacks.

While the visuals aren't much better than those seen on the GBA (like *Castlevania: Dawn Of Sorrow*, this feels like a quick and easy port), they feature great animation and are very endearing to look at. Sound is likewise very charming and has some great speech along with plenty of familiar tunes.





» Enemies always give clues as to who they will attack, so watch the bottom screen for hints



» Splitting the pair of heroes up over each of the DS's screens solves many puzzles. It's a great trick and works like a charm



OPINION

The DS is starved of decent RPGs, so it's great to see one as good as *Partners In Time* appear. I'm quite pleased with the difficulty level and length, as I've actually been able to complete it (I've no time for soul-destroying RPG's that take 60+ hours to complete). The aesthetics throughout are spot on, but it's the combat system that proves the real draw. A cool RPG that doesn't take itself too seriously.

Darran Jones



OPINION

As with many DS and GBA titles, *Mario & Luigi 2* looks like it's a forgotten game from the SNES catalogue. The sprites are full of detail, there's some great variety in the worlds you visit and the whole game just oozes charm. I do like a bit more meat on my RPGs, but the fun storyline and ace combat system more than makes up for its lack of difficulty.

Simon Phillips

While the lack of difficulty is an issue, the inventive puzzles and amusing storyline is more than enough compensation.

IN SUMMARY

Okay, so the ease with which you can complete it is rather disappointing, but otherwise, *Partners In Time* has everything you want from a great RPG. Combat is brilliant, the storyline is great and it's filled with plenty of humour. Another great DS game for your collection.

RATING **85%**



» No DS game would be complete without the obligatory map being used on the second screen

eMag



DEVIL CRASH

BALLS OF STEEL



- » **PUBLISHER** TECHNO SOFT
- » **RELEASED:** 1991
- » **GENRE:** PINBALL
- » **FEATURED HARDWARE:** MEGA DRIVE
- » **EXPECT TO PAY:** £10+



HISTORY

If there's one thing I like in videogames, it's those titles that continually allow me to improve my game – especially my high scores. While my love of shoot-'em-ups is well documented, it's shared by a similar passion for pinball games, mainly because both genres require nerves of steel and quick reflexes in order to fully master them.

Unsurprisingly, Techno Soft's conversion of *Devil Crash* was already high on my Mega Drive wants list in 1991, especially as I couldn't afford a PC Engine.

Upon receiving the game the first thing that hit me was the outstanding music that seemed to take forever to loop. I'm not normally a fan of wailing rock guitars, but the main track that played throughout perfectly complemented its frenetic gameplay and delivered a rush of adrenalin that was rarely matched by other pinball games of the time. Throw in plenty of boisterous sound effects (as well as some more sedate music for *Devil Crash's* many bonus stages) and if you shut your eyes you could have mistaken Techno Soft's superb title for a shoot-'em-up.

Then, of course, there were the freakishly gothic visuals that looked like they'd come straight out of an *Alien* flick. Armoured skeletons frequented the upper levels of the table; monks solemnly patrolled the game's many pentagrams (which were removed for the UK release) while the head of a beautiful maiden slowly dissolved into a reptilian monstrosity with each hit. For a kid brought up on *Dungeons & Dragons* it was like finding nirvana.

A final slam from the left flipper completed the maiden's transformation and I was immediately whisked off to one of the most beautiful stages I'd ever seen. Looking like a H.R. Geiger drawing come to life, I found myself facing off against a huge demon that had a smaller, fireball spitting beastie emanating from its open mouth. Nice. The hideous creation sat upon a bed of clouds and caused me no end of problems. 16 years and it still reigns supreme. Oh, and that bloody boss still gives me grief…


STAGE 6
CLEAR BONUS STAGE
STAGE 1
STAGE 2
STAGE 3
STAGE 4
STAGE 5
STAGE 6

RETRO SCENE

THIS MONTH SEES A HOST OF NEW HOME-BREW PROJECTS ANNOUNCED. RETRO GAMER LOOKS AT SOME OF ITS FAVOURITES



» Who needs next-generation games when home-brew products can look this good?

BRAND NEW MEGA DRIVE GAME NOW AVAILABLE TO PRE-ORDER

CHEEKY BEGGAR

Fans of the Mega Drive Home-Brew scene will no doubt already be aware of the impressive-looking *Beggar Prince* that's due out this summer. Created by the Super Fighter Team, *Beggar Prince* is a brand new RPG that's already looking like an essential purchase for Sega's 16-bit system.

No doubt taking its inspiration from the *Prince And The Pauper*, it starts off with a spoilt young Prince shirking his duties and swapping identities with a beggar that closely resembles him. Sadly for the Prince, his evil tutor has watched the deception from afar and aims to use the new bogus Prince to quickly seize control of the throne. Unable to return to his post, the Prince must rapidly grow up and become a wise and unselfish ruler and defeat his former tutor.

Featuring a comprehensive-looking combat system and mighty fine visuals, *Beggar Prince* is certainly looking very promising, and while the Mega Drive already has a fine stack of RPGs available for it, we're confident that it will be more than able to deliver when it's eventually released.

Pre-orders for *Beggar Prince* are available at http://www.beggarprince.com/, the game itself is due out this summer.

» It's going to be very weird buying a fully packaged Mega Drive game after all this time…



ON THE HORIZON

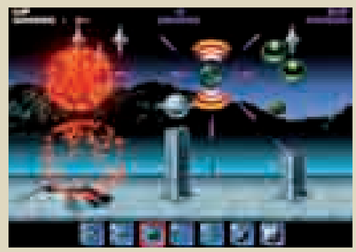
RETRO GAMER TAKES A LOOK AT SOME FUTURE HOME-BREW TITLES

The home-brew community is never quiet and there are plenty of great-looking games to look forward to in the coming months. One of the most impressive games that caught our eye recently is a stunning remake of *Total Eclipse*, an old Freescape title. A massive hit when it was first released, this new version is already looking mighty fine and should definitely be worth a download when it's finally finished.

Fans of *Dizzy* may want to head on over to http://www.bubblefox.co.uk/dl/intowonderland.zip where they can download the first level of *Dizzy Into Wonderland*. While it's far from finished, it gives a nice indication of what the final game will be like and is bound to delight fans of the 8-bit hero, especially as it plays just like the *Dizzy* games of old.

Fans of cult classic *Henry's House* on the other hand may want to check out Shane Hocking's delightful-looking remake, which is currently in its testing phase. There are still a few bugs, but Hocking is responding quickly to feedback and the final game should be hopefully finished in the next few months. If you're interested in helping out the game can be downloaded at http://shanehockings.com/downloads/henryshouse.zip, while feedback can be left at http://www.retroremakes.com/forum/showthread.php?s=&threadid=4756.

Finally, cult classic *Wizball* is also set to return and based on early screenshots it's looking very funky indeed. There's no news yet as to whether it will feature any new gameplay mechanics, but fans of the original should start getting very excited. Head on over to the work in progress folder at Retro Remakes http://www.retroremakes.com/forum/index.php?s= for more information.



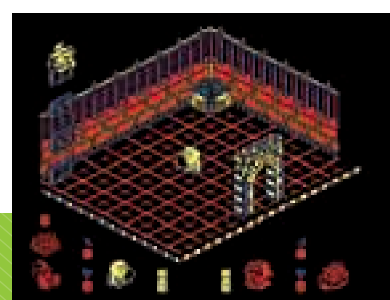
» Sensible Software's classic is getting ready to receive a brand new update and we can't wait

CPC GOES PORTABLE

NEW AMSTRAD CPC EMULATOR AVAILABLE FOR SONY'S PSP

Is there anything the PSP can't do? Not content with letting the gamer on the move watch UMDs, listen to MP3s and, of course, play great games, it now has a brand new Amstrad emulator available for it. CPC PSP is a port of Caprice32 and while it's still in its Alpha stage at the moment it's already looking mighty promising. The emulator can emulate the CPC 464, 664 and 6128, has 64/128k snapshot support and runs most games with sound at around 75 per cent of their normal speed, not bad at all at this early stage.

Sure there are a few problems at the moment – games don't sound right because of the speed of the emulator and there's a fair amount of video corruption – but if it's anything like current PSP emulators, the bugs will be quickly ironed out and then everyone can play the best version of *Head Over Heels* whilst waiting for the number 31.

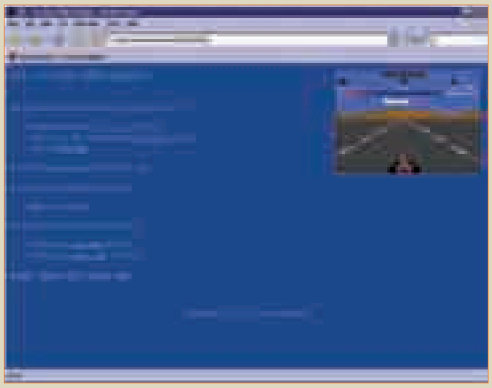


EMULATE THIS

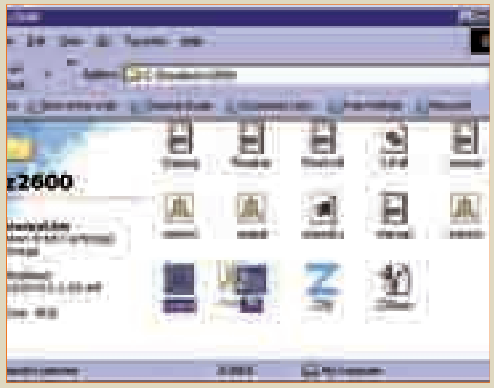
EVERY MONTH RETRO GAMER WILL BE GIVING YOU A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE WORLD OF EMULATION. TO TIE IN WITH OUR FEATURED MACHINE, THIS MONTH IT'S THE WONDERFUL ATARI 2600

Z26

Currently, one of the most well known Atari 2600 emulators is Z26 for Windows, Linux and DOS, by John Saeger. Want to get started with it? We have a quick guide to doing just that



STEP 1 Right, you want to get hold of Z26, eh? It can be downloaded from www.whimsey.com/z26/z26.html where you will find the Windows, Linux source code and MS-DOS versions. We'll deal with the Windows version here. Download it to your required destination, unzip it and you'll be ready to go. You should also download some ROM images too (providing you're legally able to, of course). Unzip and place your downloaded games in the same directory as the Z26 emulator for convenience.



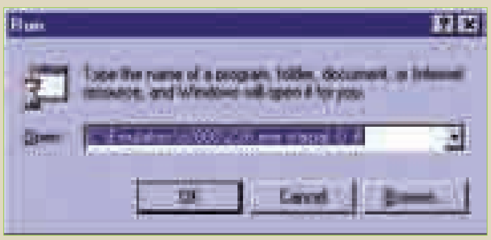
STEP 2 For a quick start, simply drag and drop your downloaded game (denoted by the .BIN extension) above the Z26.EXE file. The game will now open in 'Full-screen' mode. Joystick port 0 is emulated by the CTRL key for fire and arrows for movement, or you may use your mouse. Joystick port 1 is emulated with N for fire, S, E, F and D for left, up, right and down, respectively. PC and USB joysticks have limited support via DirectX. Note: Double-clicking on Z26.EXE will simply report the version number of the emulator – you need ROM images to use this emulator.



STEP 3 If you don't like the screen positioning in 'Full-screen' mode, it can be altered using the PAGE UP and PAGE DOWN keys. Pressing HOME will return it to its default position. Alternatively, you might like 'Windowed' mode, toggled by pressing ALT and ENTER together. When in 'Windowed' mode, you can set various resolutions between 400 x 300 pixels (default) to 800 x 600 pixels by holding down the ALT key with the number keys 0 through to 8. To pause the emulator at any time, press BACK SPACE, and to resume, press ENTER.



STEP 4 The Atari 2600's dipswitches are emulated using the function keys F1 through to F8. F1 will emulate the Reset switch, F2 the Select, F3 is Black and White, F4 is Colour, F5 will set Player 0 to Easy and F6 will set it to Difficult, and F7 will set Player 1 to Easy with F8 setting it to Difficult. To see how these keys will affect your game, refer to the instructions included in your download. To switch colour palettes between NTSC, PAL and PAL SECAM, press the Minus (-) key. Note: the emulator will automatically detect the colour palette for the game.



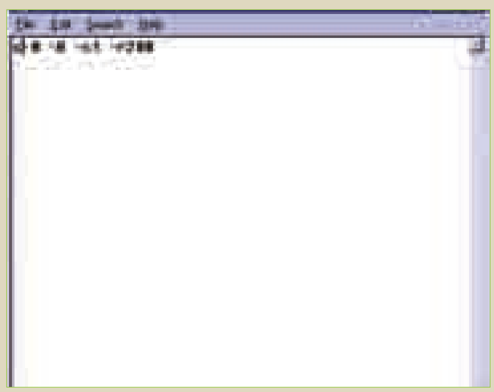
STEP 5 If you want to run Z26 through DOS or through the RUN prompt, you may set your own defaults. So, for instance, entering C:\Emulators\z2600\Z26.exe starpal -0 -B in the Run box (or simply Z26 starpal -0 -B through DOS) will set Player 0's difficulty to hard (by the -0 command) and -B will allow the emulator to save out the screens to a Windows bitmap by pressing the Equals (=) key. Note: Where it says starpal is reference to the name of the game (in this case, starpal. BIN), therefore, change the file name according to the game that you want to play.



STEP 6 Other commands of note include -1 to set Player 1's difficulty to hard, -e1 or -e2 will set the display to 'Tall screen' mode, -c0, -c1 or -c2 will set the colour palettes to NTSC, PAL or SECAM, and -j2 will reverse the keyboard controls, if you want to do such a thing. Z26 also supports light gun and paddle games. The sensitivity of the paddles can be set with the -p command, followed by a number between 1 and 15. Light gun games use the mouse as the controller, games such as *Sentinel* and *Shooting Gallery*, for instance.



STEP 7 If you want to 'over-clock' your 2600 games, you can run them at the refresh rate of your monitor with the -r command. Follow this with a number, for instance 25 for PAL/SECAM games or 30 for NTSC ones and you run them at half their intended speed. Therefore, entering -r200 (for PAL/SECAM) or -r240 (NTSC) will run the games at four times their original speed.



STEP 8 For the ultimate control, you can set your own defaults by creating a small file called z26.cli with Notepad and saving it in the same directory as your emulator and ROM images. Or, you can just enter the defaults that you want in the RUN prompt without specifying a filename. For instance, Z26.exe -0 -B -c1 -r200 will set Player 0's difficulty to hard, allow you to save the game screens out as bitmaps, default to the PAL colour palette and run all PAL games at four times their intended speed.

RETRO SCENE

Remake of the Month

EVERY MONTH RETRO GAMER WILL REVEAL A CLASSIC HOME-BREW TITLE THAT MAY HAVE PASSED YOU BY, THIS MONTH IT'S A GREAT HOMAGE OF PITFALL II

PITFALL HARRY IS BACK IN PIXELS ONCE AGAIN, EVER SEARCHING THE TREASURE THAT'LL MAKE HIM RICH

PITFALL II

David Crane's original game *Pitfall* (starring Pitfall Harry) set the gaming world alight when it was released way back in 1982 for the humble Atari 2600 (and other machines), but it's the improved sequel that gets the remake treatment, being (arguably) the better and more complete game. Starting off in similar fashion to the first instalment, you soon find that Harry now has the ability to swim, opening up a whole new world to explore.

The task in hand is to collect as much gold as possible whilst skilfully avoiding the perils in his way (such as rodents and birds, for instance). There's also the job of rescuing his niece and her feline familiar for some reason, as Harry enlisted them to help out on his adventure, but they're unfortunately lost somewhere in the binary jungle. Not the best idea to bring them along then, but it's something that adds to the game's plot.

This remake is one of those pixel-perfect ones that you find every now and then, with the great chunky graphics and the collision detection that we all hate. If you come just slightly too close to one of the roaming foes in the game, you lose points (and hence treasure) and you're taken back to the beginning. Frustrating indeed, as just one mistimed leap will mean that you can't complete the game with the maximum possible score, but this fact will keep you coming back until you do. *Pitfall II* is a true old school remake, based on a great game. Everything that was good and yet frustrating about the original is here, and although the game has aged quite significantly, it's still got an irresistible charm about it. There are also additional caverns to explore, once you've beaten the original. Go back to basics with this great remake, it doesn't disappoint.

RATING **77%**





» **FORMAT:** WINDOWS 95 OR BETTER
» **RELEASE DATE:** 2003
» **DEVELOPED BY:** RON WOLBECK
» **LINK:** WWW.GEOCITIES.COM/WOLRONWEB/
» **REVIEWED BY:** SHAUN BEBBINGTON

» Not all remakes need to have spanking new graphics, *Pitfall II* certainly doesn't

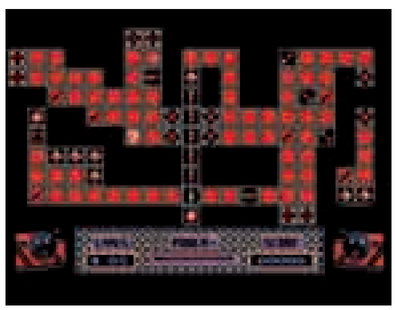


TWO-MINUTE PROFILE
IAN MUNRO

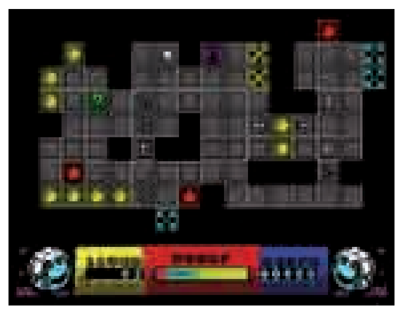
NEARLY 16 YEARS AGO, IAN MUNRO WROTE AN AMSTRAD CPC GAME CALLED IRON SPHERE, AND AFTER ALL OF THESE LONG YEARS IT IS FINALLY GOING TO BE PUBLISHED BY CRONOSOFT. RETRO GAMER TAKES A MINUTE TO TALK TO MUNRO ABOUT THIS RECENTLY REDISCOVERED GAME

Ian Munro is a typical home-brew type, with humble routes in Sinclair's ground-breaking monochrome machine, as he explains: "I've been programming on and off for over 20 years, originally as a hobby but now as a career. I first started coding in BASIC using a ZX81. After a year I progressed to a ZX Spectrum and started using machine code."

Shortly after Munro started his endeavours into machine code, he got his first big job, through a company called Millside. As he recalls though, things didn't turn out as well as they could have: "When I was 18, I managed to get some freelance work for a company called Millside Software. They had won a contract from Virgin to write 'Virgin Atlantic Challenge' on the Spectrum and Amstrad CPC. I wrote both these in a few months and then started work on a game called 'Madballs' for Ariolasoft. Unfortunately, the project was cancelled a month or so after starting it. Madballs was a disappointment and I stopped programming for a living and continued it as a hobby."



» Feast your eyes on the original *Iron Sphere* for the Amstrad CPC in all its pixelated glory



» And the new "aesthetically improved" Spectrum version – both available soon!

One of Munro's projects would eventually see the light of day, though many years after it had been written. *Iron Sphere* was written for the 6128 variety of the CPC and was created in 1990. "After finishing *Iron Sphere*, I sent it to a couple of software houses but didn't get much feedback – that was pretty much the end of the line for me, I thought, but 15 years later I found Cronosoft and sent them an updated version of it. It has since been reviewed by a couple of magazines but hasn't been released yet. It was well received though, and I can only remember one criticism and that was about the graphics being a bit bland." To respond to feedback, Munro is working on an improved version of the game for the Speccy: "I have taken note of the response to the game and have made the ZX Spectrum version a lot more aesthetically pleasing. Hopefully *Iron Sphere* will be released on both formats any time soon." And we're looking forward to seeing it.

HOME-BREW RATED

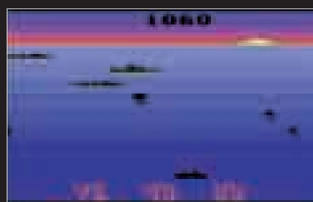
Home-brew, love it or hate it, you can't deny that it's becoming an important part of the retro scene. Once again we review two home-brew, one brand spanking new game and another that's a blast from the past…

IN THE DEEP BLUE SEA

SEAWOLF

- » **FORMAT:** ATARI 2600
- » **RELEASE DATE:** 2004
- » **DEVELOPED BY:** XYPE
- » **PUBLISHER:** ATARI AGE (REAL MEDIA/EMULATOR)
- » **PRICE:** $23 (CARTRIDGE) OR FREE (DOWNLOAD)
- » **REVIEWED BY:** SHAUN BEBBINGTON





Xype's Seawolf is a crafty remake of an old arcade game from the eighties, bearing the same name and gameplay, but for the 2600's rather limited and quirky hardware, you'd expect a fairly basic looking and playing game. Instead, you're treated to a title that looks as good as the best commercial titles from back in the day, when Activision ruled the roost (in 2600 terms, at least), in fact, is that really a 2600 screen?

Seawolf is a shoot-'em-up in which you control a submarine deep in a strategic and busy part of an ocean. Above you, and within firing range, battle and cargo ships sail past to reinforce and deliver much needed supplies to your adversary, and you're charged with taking out as many of these enemy crafts as possible with your torpedo-equipped sub. A simple task complicated by your vessels limited supply of armour and fuel; furthermore, sea debris passes and can have the annoying effect of wasting your valuable ammunition, your fuel is steadily depleting, and your foe's ships sail past at varying speeds, meaning that well-timed shots are required to progress.

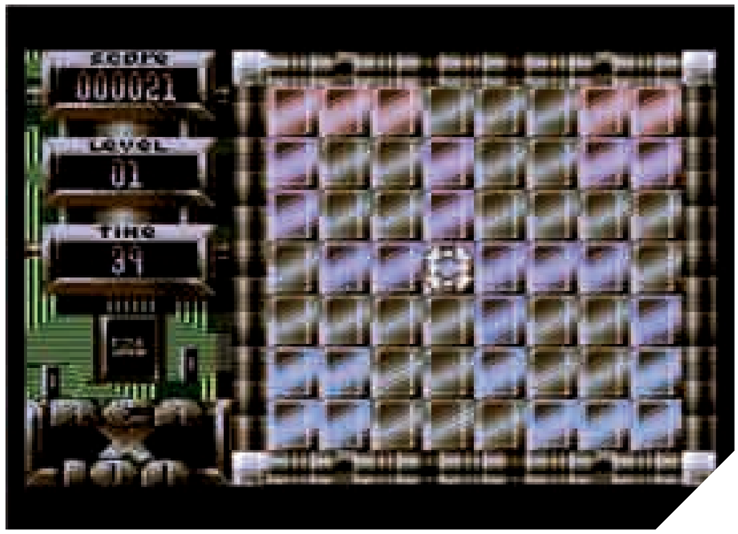
For every 1000 points scored, you get the chance to replenish your fuel and ammunition by shooting a passing cargo drop, essential to get first time as once either your fuel or ammunition is completely spent, you'll loose one of your subs. As the game progresses, things become more difficult as new attacking vessels are introduced to the game, some requiring more that one shot to destroy.

Seawolf is a seemingly simple affair, yet one that has some depth to it (pun most definitely intended). Occasionally, you'll find that it's more luck than accuracy that dispatches an enemy vessel, but that doesn't distract from the overall game. The sound effects accompany the play nicely, though the title tune can be a little annoying, or at least, it's an acquired taste. These facts don't distract from this solid, very playable and fine single-screen shooter.

RATING **77%**

» *Seawolf* brings the action of the arcade to your 2600, or emulator



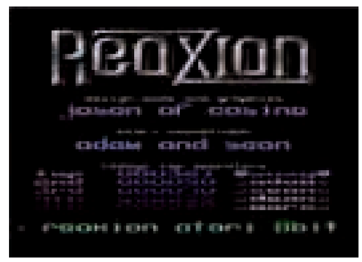


» *Reaxion* is a solid and playable puzzler with many hours of frustration to get through

PUZZLING FUN TO PREVENT NUCLEAR MELT DOWN

REAXION

- » **FORMAT:** ATARI 8-BIT (REVIEWED), COMMODORE PLUS/4
- » **RELEASE DATE:** DECEMBER 2005 (DOWNLOAD)
- » **DEVELOPED BY:** COSINE
- » **PUBLISHER:** COSINE
- » **PRICE:** £1.99 (TAPE/DISK) OR FREE (DOWNLOAD)
- » **REVIEWED BY:** DAVE JOHNSTONE



Would you bloomin' believe it? The computer that controls the Wenley Moor nuclear power plant has been infected by a rather nasty virus from an unknown source, and at the point when modern technology and McAfee has failed the world, it's up to you with your trusted Atari 8-bit to save humanity from an international nuclear disaster.

The virus has caused randomisation of the core settings on each rod, and, using an ancient software interface, it's down to you to reset all of them. As you manipulate each one though, the surrounding eight are affected, toggling their state on or off. And worse still, the shield has to be disabled to allow you to access each core, effectively limiting the time until meltdown. There's a lot at stake then.

What we have here is a logical and straightforward puzzler, originally written for the Commodore 64. Early levels ease you into the game quickly, but you'll soon stumble across your first problem, and as the game gets tougher your time limit to reset each rod becomes shortened slightly. Luckily, there's nothing that can't be completed without a little thought, and as you see how the game works, and how your actions effect each level, it'll soon become a breeze, honest.

The graphics are colourful but functional, and the accompanying musical score is likeable, though it doesn't give a sense of urgency to the game, something that might have added to the experience a little. A password system, allowing you to skip earlier levels would have been another nice addition too, but early levels can be completed quickly. The final product is a solid and well-implemented puzzle game that will give you more than a few hours of fun or frustration, depending on how you feel about the whole genre.

RATING **81%**

REAXION PLUS/4

In terms of play, the Commodore Plus/4 version is identical to the Atari one reviewed, however, the TED chip (that handles the sound and graphics) is put to very good use in the audible sense, and it's a little less colourful by comparison in-game. The overall score, therefore, is the same for this version of the game.

EMULATION NATION



APPLE MACINTOSH

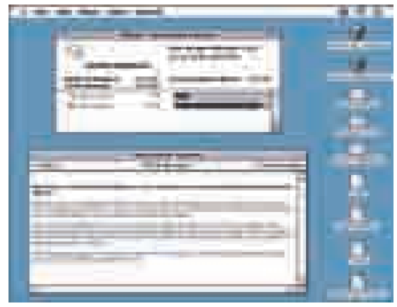
MAC ATTACK

Despite dominating the print and design industries, the Mac's largely been ignored as a gaming machine. Although the biggest PC titles are eventually ported to the Mac (usually just in time for the Windows version's price to be slashed by two-thirds – much to the annoyance of Mac owners), variety is often lacking. Perhaps this is why the Mac has a strong emulation scene – Mac users finally getting gaming diversity by plundering the past. Now, thanks to the iMac and iPod, the world's focus is on the Mac like never before, and remakes are beginning to appear alongside new and ported emulators. We check out the best of what's out there

"WHILE THE PICKINGS ARE SOMEWHAT SLIMMER THAN ON THE PC, IT'S CLEAR THAT THE MAC STILL HAS PLENTY TO OFFER RETRO GAMING FANS"

The PC is usually the platform of choice when you talk about emulation, perhaps followed by various hacked consoles. However, the perennial thorn in the side of Microsoft – the Apple Mac – has a thing or two to bring to the table. While the range of Mac-based emulators and retro remakes is far smaller than that available for the PC, interest in the Mac continues to grow, thanks to two of Apple's recent decisions – first, in making its operating system Unix-based, thereby making it significantly easier to port Unix software, and secondly in courting Intel, meaning future ports of PC software should also be much simpler.

But, aside from those people with an iPod fetish, why would anyone actually choose to run emulators on a Mac in the first place? "The main advantage is the Mac itself," says Rick Lindeman, the man behind premier Mac emulation website, www.macretro.tk. He continues: "This provides most emulators with an easy-to-use standard interface, which makes emulating a pleasure. Installation usually requires just dragging an application from a disk image to your Applications folder, and most emulators accept strange controllers easily, if you first install the nifty shareware application, USB Overdrive."



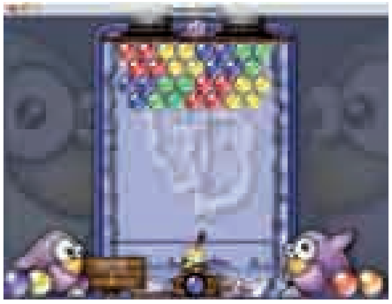
» Hosted by well-known 'abandonware' website Home of the Underdogs, Macintosh Garden (http://mac.the-underdogs.org/) houses numerous neglected and long-forgotten Mac retro games

Despite its ease of use, the Mac is still used by far fewer people than the PC, and Brad Oliver – Mac games developer and the main driving force behind MacMAME – suggests that this means emulation is perhaps more important to the Mac than it is to other platforms: "While I don't know if I would go so far as to characterise MacMAME as 'important' to the Mac any more than any other given piece of software, I certainly find the concept of emulation important, particularly since the Mac is a minority platform. The ability to run other software, even if through an emulation layer, helps fill the holes when a native Mac solution doesn't exist."

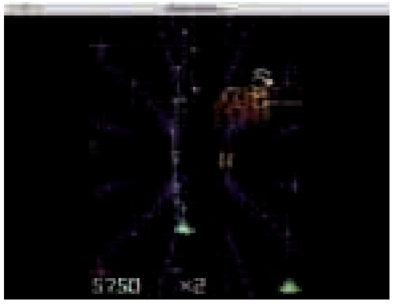
MAC RETRO

One such hole is games. Despite the popularity of the iMac, the Mac's gaming catalogue is somewhat woeful, and this has been the case for a long time now. Over the years, this has led to many programmers porting across PC and Unix-based emulators, so that Mac users at least have something to play, aside from expensive ports of ageing 3D shoot-'em-ups and strategy games that originated on the PC. The most prominent figure in emulation ports is undoubtedly Richard Bannister (interviewed elsewhere), whose work has ensured that Mac users can sample the delights of the Amstrad CPC, NES, Atari Lynx, Sega Master System, Wonderswan, PC Engine, Vectrex, and many more systems besides. However, John Stiles' SNES9X port – work on which continues in an 'unofficial' manner by way of various contributors – is also worthy of note, as is the aforementioned MacMAME (which adds a user-friendly, Mac-based front-end to the PC-originated project), and the more recent FUSE (the Free Unix Spectrum Emulator),

THERE'S SO MUCH MORE TO THE APPLE MACINTOSH THAN SIMPLY USING IT TO CREATE MAGAZINES AND SPREADSHEETS. CRAIG GRANNELL TAKES A LOOK AT THE SLOWLY EVOLVING MAC HOME-BREW SCENE AND REVEALS SOME OF ITS BEST KEPT SECRETS

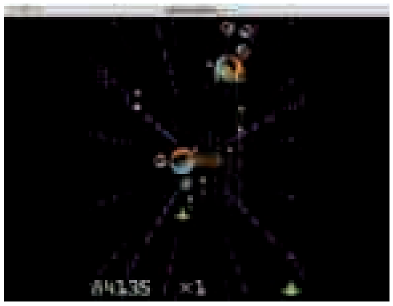


» This popular freeware game surfaced on various platforms, and its *Bust-a-Move*-meets-penguins fun is also available for Mac OS X (see: http://redivi.com/~bob/frozenbubble.html)



» Jeff Minter's update of *Gridrunner* caused a stir, and now it's available for the Mac, too, via www.llamasoft.co.uk/gridrunner.php. It's, like, psychedelic, man



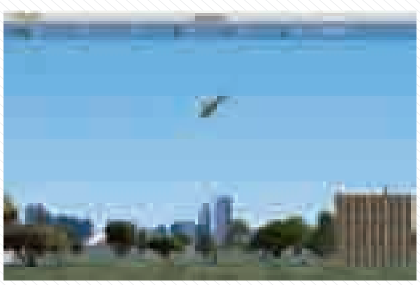


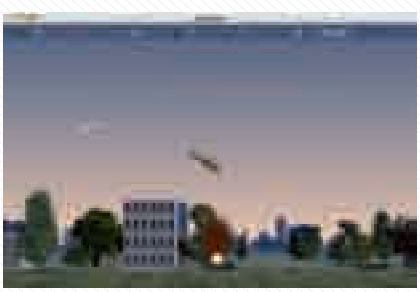
brought to the Mac by the talents of Fredrick Meunier.

However, while the Mac tends to follow Windows and Unix, this isn't always the case. "The first arcade emulators that were released, the Williams classics, were done so exclusively for the Mac, which I would consider a large milestone in emulation," says Brad Oliver. Another major landmark in emulation's history was Connectix Virtual Game Station, which eventually found its way to Windows, but was initially created for the Mac. "Its release was the biggest shake-up the Mac emulation scene has ever had," claims Richard Bannister. "Even now, several years later, there is no PlayStation emulator for the Mac that approaches the compatibility and speed CVGS achieved."

However, landmarks needn't always be earth-shattering events, and some more modest achievements have occurred in Mac-only emulators. One example is Roland Lieger's Power64, one of the best C64 emulators on any platform, and the first

CHOPPER





At two-years-old, this entry for the uDevGame 2003 competition is getting on a bit, but it's most definitely worth mentioning in case it passed by any Mac owners reading this. The website describes *Chopper* as an 'action-packed side-scrolling helicopter game', and in the minds of most retro gamers, that can only mean one thing: *Choplifter!* However, this is more an update than a straight remake of the ageing classic; set across three difficulty levels, the 48 levels gradually introduce bazooka-firing enemies, hostile tanks and jets, adverse weather conditions, and increasingly difficult locations to pilot around, as you try to save the hapless citizens. Excellent graphics and a pumping soundtrack complete one of the best retro-oriented games found on the Mac.

INTERVIEW

RICHARD BANNISTER

"WHILE THE PICKINGS ARE SOMEWHAT SLIMMER THAN ON THE PC, IT'S CLEAR THAT THE MAC STILL HAS PLENTY TO OFFER RETRO GAMING FANS"



Richard Bannister is a major driving force behind Mac-based emulation. Over the years, the network field engineer and roller coaster fan from Dublin has ported a slew of emulators, covering a huge range of systems. As for his first love: "I owned an Amstrad CPC for the better part of a decade, and I still regret selling it," although he adds that "given the amount of space in my current apartment, it's probably no harm that it's gone!" With experience on several other retro platforms, including the Commodore 64, Sega Mega Drive, Commodore PETs ("a whole lab full!"), and 16-bit rivals the Amiga and Atari ST, Richard's experimentation with programming eventually led him to emulation.

"At school, I was more interested in tinkering with a C compiler than learning what teachers felt I should know," explains Richard. By the age of 15 he had several shareware projects on sale, and as time went on it became apparent that Richard was becoming less interested in programming: "For a while, I fully anticipated a career as a software developer, but I enjoy programming far more when I can write what I want to rather than what I'm told to!"

Richard's first emulator was the Mac port of Frodo. "At the time there were no C64 emulators for the Mac that had sound emulation, and I was determined to correct that," he says. Numerous other ports of PC- and Unix-based emulators followed, and at the time of writing, Richard's catalogue of emulator titles numbers an impressive 28. He somewhat downplays the achievement: "Once you've converted an emulator from Windows or Unix to the Mac, there's not a great deal of challenge in repeating the job on a new project." But he's keen to stress the importance of documenting old systems: "Major titles – *Pac-Man*, *Sonic*, et al – will always be preserved, but many others would be lost without emulation to keep them alive. Therefore, safeguarding classic systems is extremely important, especially as the younger generation grows up with doorstops such as the Xbox 360, where beautiful graphics often disguise a lack of gameplay."

This emphasis on preservation is taken to extremes in the work Richard's most proud of: "That would be the cycle-exact emulators I've converted. Traditional emulators often take shortcuts to run at acceptable speeds on today's hardware. Although this rarely affects emulated software, it's nice to see all these hacks removed for true authenticity. The most recent example from me is BSNES, which only attains full speed on the fastest Macs Apple has produced, but the end result is as accurate as you can get."

Website: www.bannister.org



EMULATION NATION

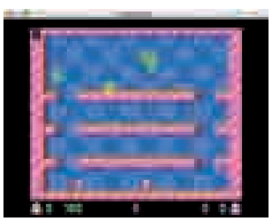
THERE'S SO MUCH MORE TO THE APPLE MACINTOSH THAN SIMPLY USING IT TO CREATE MAGAZINES AND SPREADSHEETS. CRAIG GRANNELL LOOKS AT THE EVOLVING MAC HOME-BREW SCENE AND REVEALS ALL



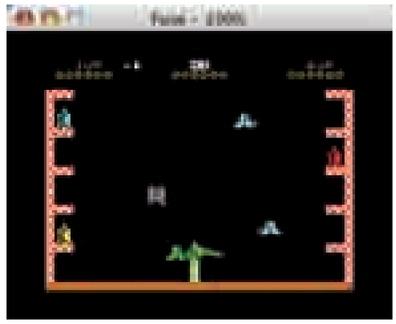
BUB & BOB 2

Although the majority of Mac retro remakes are freeware, a few authors try and flog their wares to the masses. One such example is McSebi's *Bub & Bob 2*, a rather blatant *Bubble Bobble* clone, right down to the cute dinosaurs on the splash screen. All 100 of the original levels are present and correct, and the gameplay is largely authentic, although a quick look at the game is enough to tell that the graphics have been spruced up somewhat. Sadly, the original music is absent, replaced by some varied and accomplished but somehow less charming tunes. A more interesting change to the original is the level editor, enabling you to create your own *Bubble Bobble* (sorry, *Bub & Bob 2*) screens, which can be shared with other players worldwide.

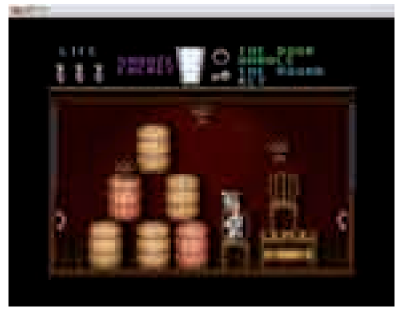
website: www.mcsebi.com







» Although C64 lovers are better catered for on the Mac than Spectrum fans, supporters of Sir Clive's rubber-keyed wonder should check out Fuse (http://fuse-emulator.sourceforge.net/)



» A Mac version of the beautifully remade *Pyjamarama* can be found at http://remakeszone.com/?lng=English

to offer features such as an anti-aliased display and true drag-and-drop C64 file management. "The lack of first-person shooters is a definite benefit of the C64," says Roland, wryly referring to the lack of variety in the Mac gaming scene we alluded to earlier, when we ask him about why he first created his emulator. "In 1988, my main machine was an Atari ST. One day, someone at the local computer club brought a C64 emulator to a meeting. It only offered minimal functionality and 30 per cent speed, but I was fascinated by the idea of emulation." Eventually blessed with the 'incredible' power of a 60Mhz PowerPC Mac, Roland set about creating 'real' emulation of a C64. "I began work on Power64, coding the essential parts – CPU, VIC, SID, CIA – in assembler, and was rewarded with a working emulator that ran at 100 per cent speed with only 50 per cent Mac CPU load." As Macs became faster, features were added to Power64, including two of Roland's original C64 games, *BlockOut* and *Quadromania*. "The application still contains the old assembler code, though, to keep it swift," remarks Roland.

UPDATING A CLASSIC

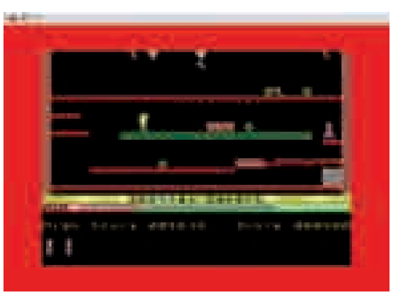
There are drawbacks to creating emulators on any platform, though, as Roland explains: "Getting the first code to run and implementing only the well-documented features is quite easy. Discovering all of the undocumented features is much harder. I've worked on Power64 for almost a decade now, and it's still not finished." This lack of closure could be what drives many PC programmers to work on standalone retro remakes rather than emulators; single-game projects can usually be completed more rapidly, and you don't have to spend ages pulling apart your creation if one of several thousand related pieces of software fails to work with it.

Similar thoughts undoubtedly cross the mind of Mac programmers, and while Mac-based retro remakes are few and far between, some notable examples exist. Shareware company McSebi's entire catalogue is based on classic videogames. While *MacDo* (essentially an updated Mr. Do) is for Mac OS 9 only, *Pac the Man 2* (a Pac-Man update) and *Bub & Bob 2* (based on *Bubble Bobble* and *Bubble Memories*) are both Mac OS X-native applications, and each brings a subtle new twist to the original game, while keeping the bulk of the classic gameplay intact. Majic Jungle Software's *Chopper* takes things a step further; dragging Brøderbund's *Choplifter* kicking and screaming into the present, with beautifully rendered graphics and effects, a kicking soundtrack, and random elements each time you play. The company is currently working on *Backyard Racing*, a game that will bring *Micro Machines*-style gameplay to the Mac. Possibly the most impressive Mac-based update of them all, though, is Giles C Williams' stunning *Oolite*, which takes Braben and Bell's timeless space-trading epic *Elite* and adds new graphics, customisation options, missions, features and effects (although purists aren't entirely out of luck – the game includes a 'strict gameplay' option that deactivates anything not available in the original *Elite* universe). Linux and Windows ports are now available, too, but work on the Mac original continues, ensuring improvements appear on that platform first.

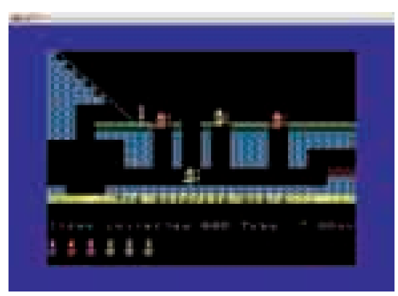
MAC TO THE FUTURE

So while the pickings are somewhat slimmer than on the PC, it's clear that the Mac still has plenty to offer retro gaming fans; but opinion appears to be divided on what the future holds for the platform. "Unless some new blood gets involved, I don't see things going very far from where they are right now," warns Richard Bannister. "There are only about half a dozen people who have released hobbyist emulators for the Mac over the past few years, compared to at least ten times that in the PC world." Rick Lindeman is more optimistic, though: "With all new Macs soon to be based on Intel architecture, this should ensure that Mac-based emulation follows Windows-based emulation even faster, because it'll be much easier to port emulators across." Additionally, the affordability and usability of the Mac mini has encouraged many PC-oriented programmers to dip their toes in the waters of Mac OS X. This, along with increased use in cross-platform languages such as BlitzMax, will hopefully lead to a huge increase in Apple Mac-based retro remakes and emulators over the coming years, shaking the scene – if you'll pardon the pun – to the core.

"GETTING THE FIRST CODE TO RUN AND IMPLEMENTING ONLY THE WELL-DOCUMENTED FEATURES IS QUITE EASY. DISCOVERING ALL OF THE UNDOCUMENTED FEATURES IS MUCH HARDER" ROLAND LEIGER



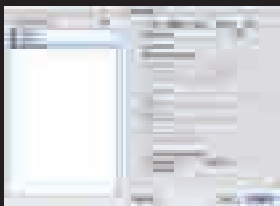
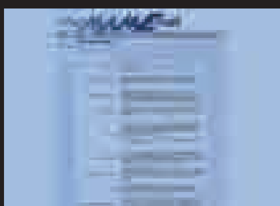




» A trio of Andy Noble's excellent Speccy remakes are available for Mac OS X via the RetroSpec website (http://retrospec.sgn.net)

MACINTOSH EMULATORS

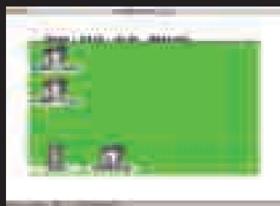
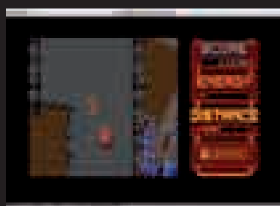
THE MAC EMULATION SCENE MAY NOT BE AS ADVANCED AS THE PC'S BUT THERE ARE STILL PLENTY OF CLASS EMULATORS AVAILABLE FOR IT, YOU JUST NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO FIND THEM…

MACMAME

MAME is the undisputed king of arcade emulators, and it enables you to sample a staggering number of arcade games – a rather nice side effect of the project's 'documentation' aims. Mac users requiring an arcade fix can rest easy, as the Mac port – MacMAME – continues to be regularly updated, and it's rarely too far behind the DOS version. Of course, the Mac version brings with it the benefits of the Mac OS X user interface; configuration is a breeze, and the front-end's Info pane provides easy access to information about the currently selected game. The only downside to MacMAME is that it's noticeably slower than the PC version, although Apple's forthcoming switch to Intel processors may help solve this issue.

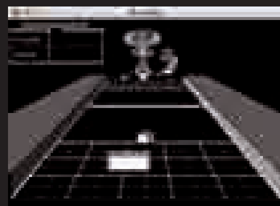
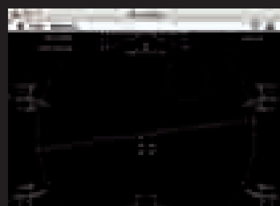
» **WEBSITE:** WWW.MACMAME.NET

NOSTALGIA

With Amiga emulation on Mac OS X currently rather akin to pulling teeth, 16-bit fans are better off sticking with the Commodore machine's bitter rival, the Atari ST. The ST is ably emulated on the Mac by way of the wittily named NoSTalgia, a Mac-only emulator from Belgium. Compatibility for the ST's vast games catalogue is pretty high, including full support for samples, and the Mac's mouse is used to drive the ST's pointer when you're rummaging around the 'little green desktop'. The only real problem with the application is its quirky joystick support. The most reliable way to get this working seems to be to select 'Arrows' from Options > Joysticks, and then use the arrow keys and Ctrl for the joystick and fire button – but only once Caps-Lock is activated…

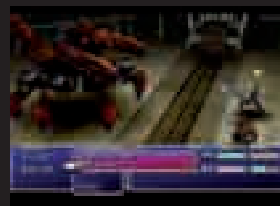
» **WEBSITE:** HTTP://USERS.SKYNET BE/SKY39147/

MINI VMAC

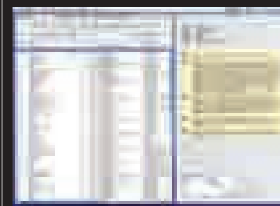
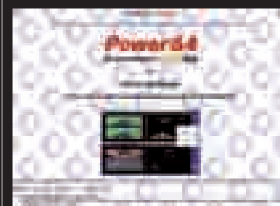
Apple is inclined to blaze ahead with technology, and the term 'backwards compatible' tends to be increasingly absent from the minds of the team at Cupertino. This has resulted in many classic Mac games no longer working on modern systems. Fortunately, Mini vMac (whose tiny download size is about the size of a large JPEG) enables you to emulate a Mac… on your Mac. Assuming you can lay your hands on a Mac Plus ROM, you can use a freebie version of System 6.0.8 from Apple's website to run a number of black and white games, including an utterly brilliant version of *Shufflepuck Café*. Also, disk images can just be dragged from OS X's Finder on to Mini vMac's, rather than you having to mess around with fiddly menus.

» **WEBSITE:** HTTP://MINIVMAC SOURCEFORGE.NET/


VIRTUAL GAME STATION

Possibly the most infamous of all Mac-based emulators (although the project also eventually found its way to Windows) was Virtual Game Station by Connectix. Unlike the vast majority of emulators, this was a commercial product, and one designed to emulate a system still in production. Although early versions were rather flaky, Connectix's later efforts enabled you to play the majority of the vast PlayStation catalogue on your Mac, taking advantage of existing Mac-based controllers and the ability to save as many virtual memory cards as you could ever wish for. Unsurprisingly, Sony's feathers were ruffled, and it managed to get a court injunction to halt CVGS sales.

WHEN I'M 64

The Commodore 64 is well catered for on the Mac. Along with Richard Bannister's port of Frodo, there's Roland Lieger's excellent Power64, one of the most accomplished C64 emulators on any platform. It fittingly mirrors Mac OS X's ease of use: text can be copied and pasted directly into Power64, saving you typing in long listings, and files on disk images can be managed via drag and drop as easily as in Finder.

Another C64-based emulator that takes advantage of the Mac's excellent UI is SIDPLAY for Mac OS X. Andreas Varga's rewrite enables you to search your collection with ease, export SIDs to PRG, MP3 or AIFF, and rapidly create favourites lists by bookmarking individual SIDs.

» **WEBSITE:** WWW.INFINITE-LOOP. AT/POWER64/INDEX.HTML

» **WEBSITE:** WWW.SIDMUSIC.ORG/ SIDPLAY/MAC/

HIGH SCORE

CENTIPEDE



BEWARE THE POISONOUS MUSHROOMS. FIRE UP MAME AND REVISIT ATARI'S BUG BLASTING CLASSIC FROM 1980, WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM CENTIPEDE CHAMPION AND GOLDEN AGE GAMING GURU DONALD HAYES

Fresh from the huge success of Asteroids, designer Ed Logg was thumbing through Atari's book of game ideas and settled on 'Bug Shooter' for his next project. He was joined by Dona Bailey, one of the few female programmers in the industry at the time, who fleshed out Logg's initial code and was responsible for the game's distinctive colour scheme – a mesmerising blend of psychedelic pastels.

The simple premise of shooting a centipede as it snaked down the playfield was given a new twist when it was suggested the mushrooms that littered the screen should be destroyable. Thus a flea was added to bring more fungi, soon joined by a spider and a scorpion, and the cast of insect adversaries was complete.

Centipede was a massive hit and is often credited with luring women into arcades for the very first time. Received wisdom states the pleasing colours attracted female players or else they were subconsciously drawn to the woman's touch behind the game's design (though the 'stroking balls' theory is yet to be discounted).

The game's popularity led to it being selected by Tournament Games for the first National Videogames Championship, held in Chicago in 1981. The event was won by Eric Ginner, who was rather disappointed to discover his $12,000 prize winning cheque bounced – he revealed the full story of the fiasco and how Atari stepped in to save the day in Retro Gamer 15.



THE EXPERT

To begin this new series, we decided to go right to the top. Donald Hayes is a latter-day high scoring phenomenon. Despite arriving somewhat late to the party, his mastery of arcade games from the early eighties has earned him the coveted mantle of 'Holder of Most Concurrent World Records' (he's up to nine, but the march into double figures seems unstoppable). Last year, he won the inaugural 'European Championship' held at the Classic Gaming Expo in London, which is a fair distance from the convenience store in New Hampshire, USA where it all started.

"*Centipede* has always been a favourite," Donald begins. "My friends and I would play at the local store and had a friendly rivalry with kids from another school, which spurred me on to get better. 300K was an early goal, but then I got the 'Video Masters Guide' and that helped me take it to the next level. There's so much to the game that you don't see at the lower levels. It's really complex."

Part of that intricacy centres on the trackball controller. The deft finger work and precise movements of expert players require a controller in perfect working order – something that a 20-year-old cabinet can seldom boast. It was to be Donald's undoing when he first came across *Twin Galaxies* and the whole high score scene at the second Funspot Tournament in 2000, held at the famous Funspot arcade in New Hampshire, located just an hour from his home. His impressive 3.7 million, though short of the 5.5 million World Record, caught the attention of TG's Scorelord Walter Day, despite an unreliable trackball that ended Donald's game somewhat prematurely. But it's a poor workman that blames his tools and he returned on 5 November of that year, suitably prepared…

"I took the control panel from my own machine at home and had it fitted. Nine hours later, I had 7,111,111 on my first attempt. I could have gone on, maybe to 10 million, but the arcade was closing and my bladder was pressing…"

With the *Centipede* World Record to his name and encouragement from the 'motivational' day, more records soon fell. *Tron* followed the next year, then *Super Zaxxon*, *Dig Dug* and more recently he's performed a 'Perfect *Pac-man*' and toppled Mark Robichek's 20-year-old *Frogger* high score, featured in Retro Gamer 14. His records encompass a broad range of genres, the only common thread being a love of the game in question, but when his website methodically catalogues his top scores on literally hundreds of arcade machines, you wonder if he ever met a game he didn't like. Is this meticulous chronicling of his progress a worrying indication of autistic tendencies?

"I don't think so," replies Donald, his job producing web-based applications for Special Schools perhaps informing his response. "I just like to keep track of things I've done. I used to keep a record of all my grades in College, so maybe it's an extension of that. I don't like to throw things away. I'm a bit of a packrat. Actually, there's a game called *Peter Packrat*…"

And maybe that's a big clue to record number ten…

THE KNOWLEDGE

"The biggest mistake most players make is either holding down the fire button or trying to press it as fast as possible. You can only have one shot on screen at a time, so neither method helps. Learn some timing and judge when you want to fire. That'll double your score.

The Spider is the enemy that seems to cause players most problems because it feels like it's



» Donald Hayes receiving a certificate for his gaming skills at last year's CGEUK

HIGH SCORE NEWS

Galaxian Champion Gary Whelan is making steady progress towards breaking the million points barrier (and netting himself a $1000 *Twin Galaxies Bounty* in the process). He's currently up to 800,000, double his existing official World Record, only to discover a mysterious player from Sheffield has achieved a staggering 1.4million…

The 'Legends of the Golden Age' tournament held in Houston, Texas, in December of last year saw several long-standing records broken, but perhaps the most apt was Paul Dean's marathon game on *Frenzy*, Stern's follow-up to *Bezerk*. Paul suffers from Sciatica, which meant he had to spend the vast majority of the 41 hours on his feet…

Due to debt and demoralising negativity from those who should know better, heroic CGEuk organisers Chris and Christine Millard have cancelled this year's event. Thus the high score challenge issued to the French appears to be dead in The Channel. Shame – how sweet would it be to beat the old enemy at *Frogger*…



"THE BIGGEST MISTAKE MOST PLAYERS MAKE IS EITHER HOLDING DOWN THE FIRE BUTTON OR TRYING TO PRESS IT AS FAST AS POSSIBLE. YOU CAN ONLY HAVE ONE SHOT ON SCREEN AT A TIME, SO NEITHER METHOD HELPS"

DONALD HAYES

out to get you – it isn't! The pattern it follows means it can only go up, down or forward at a 45° angle. It never changes direction – if it enters the screen from the right, for example, it will continue travelling leftwards, so you can either get to the right of it and avoid it, or else wait till it hits the bottom of the screen, slip beneath it and shoot!

When the Centipede hits the bottom of the screen, it'll send out Centipede heads from row seven (counting up from the bottom). If you plant mushrooms one column from the edge of the screen at rows 2,4 and 6, the Centipede will get trapped in an endless figure of eight, leaving you to pick off everything else. It's called the 'side feed trap' and is considered illegal if you're going for a World Record.

If you want to try for the World Record, I suggest the 'shoot-'em-up style'. The flea that drops mushrooms behind it will only come if the number of mushrooms in the bottom section falls beneath a certain number – and that number increases as your score gets higher. By 600K, it's just too hard to keep enough mushrooms down there. Try to keep the entire bottom mushroom-free. This means a constant barrage of fleas, particularly at scores over a million, but though it's hard to do, it's the way to break the record."



» It looks simple, but the scoring behind it is anything but. Are you up to the challenge?

BARGAIN HUNT

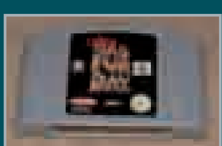
HUNT DOWN BARGAINS OR JUST DRINK UP THE LOVELINESS OF ALL THIS RETRO GOODNESS. FEAST YOUR EYES ON SIX PAGES OF ALL THE VERY BEST THAT RETRO GAMING HAS TO OFFER…

Collecting retro games can be great fun, but you need to also have a rough idea of how much it's going to cost you. So here for your buying pleasure is a *Retro Gamer* buyer's guide. Where possible we have endeavoured to list the earliest international launch date, be it Asia, America or Europe. Prices were compiled from a variety of sources, including eBay, Japan auctions, car boot sales, traders and general consensus. Foreign items will often be cheaper in their local country, so regional differences should be considered. Also, bear in mind that online items can often be found cheaper than you will find in specialist stores. If you see an item selling for far less, good for you! We aim to help with finding those bargains, but if you see an item sold for much higher, make sure you really want to purchase it. Prices fluctuate and the market sways, so there can never be a concrete listing. Bear in mind that something is worth as much as someone else is willing to pay. No one is perfect though, and we will openly admit that with over 100 different systems to list, mistakes can happen. If you spot a glaring error in our listings, please drop us an email at retrogamer@imagine-publishing.co.uk and let us know about it!

RETRO AUCTION WATCH

***Retro Gamer* will be sifting through countless pages of eBay and reporting on any items of interest (hardware and software) that have caught our eye. If something has sold for a staggeringly high amount of money (or is interesting or quirky) you'll find it here.**

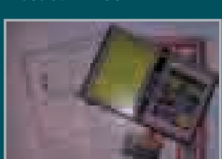
CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY – N64 (cart only)
Normally sells for **£10 +**
Ended at **£24.50**



DONKEY KONG – Game & Watch
Normally sells for **£25 +**
Ended at **£46.10**



EMERALD ISLE – BBC B
Normally sells for **£7 +**
Ended at **£21.00**



3DO



3DO GOLDSTAR
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£45 - £60**



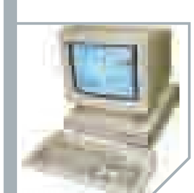
PANASONIC FZ-1 (FRONT LOADER)
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40 - £60**



PANASONIC FZ-10 (TOP LOADER)
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 - £35**

While 3DO systems had much potential, there wasn't enough software support and it eventually stopped production. There were still some great games released!
- STAR CONTROL 2
- RETURN FIRE
- CRASH AND BURN

ACORN



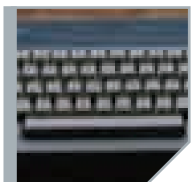
ARCHIMEDES
» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 (with games)**

Early RISC-based home computer, quite powerful at the time.
- VIRUS (STRIPPED DOWN VERSION OF ZARCH)



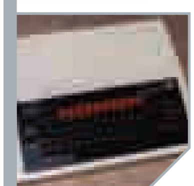
ATOM
» YEAR **1980**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50**

Extremely old home computer by Acorn that's now hard to find.



ACORN ELECTRON
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**

Budget version of the BBC home computer (below).



BBC MICRO
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15**

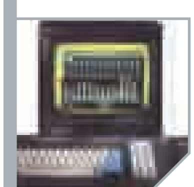
An classic British home computer, and quite popular. Affectionately known as 'the Beeb'.
- EXILE
- ELITE
- WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST

AMSTRAD



CPC 464
» YEAR **1984**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 - £25**

Early classic 8-bit home computer from Amstrad, designed to compete against the C64 and ZX Spectrum. This early model has a built in cassette tape deck. Beware the models that come with a green screen monitor!



CPC 664
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 - £25**

Like the 464, except with a floppy disk drive. A short-lived model that was soon replaced by the superior 6128.



CPC 6128
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25+**

Improved model which doubled the RAM of previous iterations. Later 'Plus' models came with a cartridge port.
- RENEGADE
- RICK DANGEROUS
- GRYZOR



GX4000
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50-£70**

Console version of the CPC Plus range, came with joypads. Limited range of games.
- BURNIN' RUBBER
- PANG
- SWITCHBLADE

APPLE



APPLE II
» YEAR **1977**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30+ (with games)**

Like many early computers the Apple II was hand-built machine and sold to enthusiasts.
- KARATEKA
- ULTIMA IV
- LODE RUNNER

ATARI



400/800/600XL/XE
» YEAR **1979**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20+**

Series of old 8-bit Atari home computers.
- DROP ZONE
- THRUST
- ZYBEX



2600 (VCS)
» YEAR **1977**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 - £30**

Earliest console by Atari. Various models, many with the classic wood panelling effect. Many UK gamers had their first taste of videogames on this.
- PITFALL
- ADVENTURE
- COSMIC ARK

RARITY GUIDE

ROCKING HORSE SHIT
HEN'S TEETH
LUCKY FIND
EBAY REGULAR
CAR BOOT SALE BARGAIN

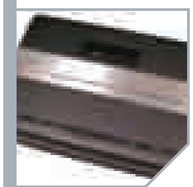


5200

» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30**

Unpopular successor to the 2600, regarded as an Atari 400 without a keyboard.

- RESCUE ON FRACTALUS
- DIG DUG
- ZAXXON



7800

» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 - £40**

Handily, Atari made the 7800 backwards compatible with the ever popular 2600.

- KARATEKA
- CHOPLIFTER
- WINTER GAMES

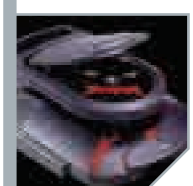


JAGUAR

» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**

Failed attempt to beat the PlayStation and Saturn in the console race. Few decent games. But it does have Jeff Minter's Tempest!

- TEMPEST 2000
- ALIEN VS PREDATOR
- BATTLESPHERE (RARE AND EXPENSIVE!)



JAGUAR CD

» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£70**

Rare and overpriced CD add-on for the Jaguar. Very few games, but it does look very much like a toilet seat!

- BATTLEMORPH CD
- HIGHLANDER CD
- TEMPEST 2000 MUSIC CD



LYNX I/II (2ND IS SMALLER)

» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15**

Powerful handheld from Atari that failed due to poor marketing and battery life.

- BLUE LIGHTNING
- CALIFORNIA GAMES
- DIRTY LARRY RENEGADE COP



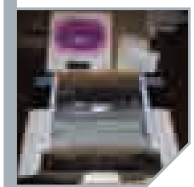
ST

» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 depending on model**

Atari home computer and a big rival to the Amiga. There are many different models of various specifications.

- DUNGEON MASTER
- POPULOUS
- DAMOCLES

BANDAI



GUNDAM RX-78 COMPUTER

» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£75 (prices fluctuate wildly)**

Ultra rare, early Japanese games computer by Bandai. Aimed at both gamers and anime fans. Expect to pay a much higher price for a machine that's in mint condition.

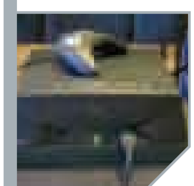


PLAYDIA

» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£90 and upwards according to eBay**

Bizarre Japan-only console, apparently made for kids.

- SAILOR MOON
- ULTRAMAN
- DRAGON BALL Z



PIPPIN(ATMARK)

» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx. £500+**

A strange hybrid system from Bandai and Apple. Very expensive and with very few games available. It's high prce means that it's normally only sought after by collectors.

- RACING DAYS
- DRAGON BALL Z
- GUNDAM TACTICS



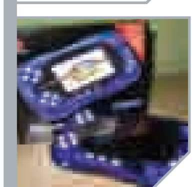
WONDERSWAN (B/W)

» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**



WONDERSWAN COLOR

» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**



WONDERSWAN CRYSTAL

» YEAR **2000**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25**

Handheld system by Bandai, fairly popular. Can now be bought very cheaply, especially in Japan. Be sure to buy the SwanCrystal, which is basically an improved 'Color' model. Both colourised models can run B/W WS games.

- GUNPEY EX
- SWAN COLOSSEUM
- JUDGEMENT SILVERSWORD

COMMODORE



AMIGA500/600/1200

» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 (more with games, depending on model)**

Classic and incredibly popular 16-bit home computer by Commodore, that was designed to compete against the Atari ST range. Vast array of different models, with differing specs, the Amiga 500 (with a RAM upgrade) is a particular favourite with many gamers.

- SPEEDBALL 2: BRUTAL DELUXE
- LEMMINGS
- SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER

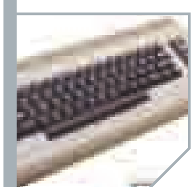


C16/PLUS 4

» YEAR **1984**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15 - £30**

The less-well known siblings of the C64, but without the compatibility of its peers.

- TUTTI FRUTTI
- MONTY ON THE RUN
- KIKSTART



C64

» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 - £30**

One of the best selling 8-bit home computers of all time. Competed against the Spectrum and Amstrad home computers. Featured the wonderful SID sound chip that was put to amazing use by the likes of Ben Daglish and Rob Hubbard.

- WIZBALL
- MAYHEM IN MONSTERLAND
- PARADROID



C64 GS (GAMES SYSTEM)

» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Aprox. £30**

Commodore's cartridge-based machine that tried to take on both Nintendo and Sega. Sadly failed due to a lack of support from most publishers.

- PANG
- NAVY SEALS
- BATTLE COMMAND



C128

» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 - £50**

Three machines (CPM, C64 and C128) in one box. Specialised software is relatively small in number.

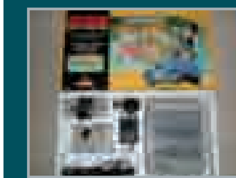


CDTV

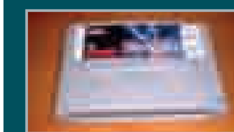
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**

Commodore aimed for the 'every home should have one' market and missed by a country

SUPER MARIO ALL STARS
Box Set - SNES
Normally sells for **£35 +**
Ended at **£51**



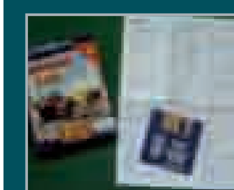
SUPER RETURN OF THE JEDI
SNES - (cart only)
Normally sells for £7 +
Ended at **£16.00**



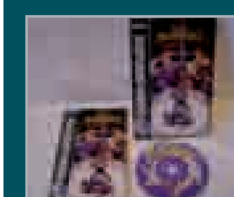
COOKIE – SPECTRUM (ROM cartridge)
Normally sells for **£15 +**
Ended at **£29.00**



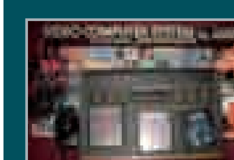
STUNT CAR RACER - AMIGA
Normally sells for **£5 +**
Ended at **£16**



DRAGON FORCE - SATURN
Normally sells for **£50 +**
Ended at **£73**



ATARI 2600 AND THREE GAMES - ATARI
Normally sells for **£20 +**
Ended at **£53.19**



mile. A curious mixture of games and educational material.



CD32
» YEAR **1992**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25**
CD-based console that followed on from the experimental CDTV. Sometimes described as a consolised Amiga 1200 with CD drive. Despite featuring some extremely impressive games, the majority failed to improve on their 500 and 1200 counterparts.
- EXILE
- SIMON THE SORCERER
- ALIEN BREED 3D

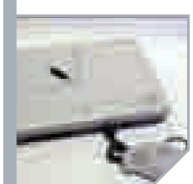


VIC-20
» YEAR **1980**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 - £30 depending on condition/extras**
The computer that established Commodore brand.
- HELLGATE
- SERPENTINE
- SUPER SMASH

FUJITSU



FUJITSU FM COMPUTERS
» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100+**
Powerful early 90s home computers by Fujitsu, which could read CDs.



FUJITSU FM TOWNS MARTY
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£200+**
A legendary console, which contains both a CD and disk drive. Based on Fujitsu's old FM Towns computers, and mostly backwards compatible with the majority of games. Very expensive, (especially if you find a machine in mint condition), but with a lot of chic!
- ZAK MC KRAKEN
- TATSUJIN OU
- SCAVENGER 4

MISCELLANEOUS



BALLY ASTROCADE
» YEAR **1978**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**
Early videogame system that used interchangeable cartridges, developed by the Bally games division at Midway Games.
- GATE ESCAPE
- ICBM ATTACK
- TREASURE COVE



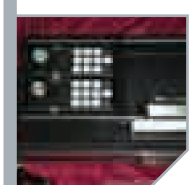
BARCODE BATTLER
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£5**
Handheld LCD game, where you must swipe barcoded cards (or barcodes taken from soup packets!) to gather stats, and then battle against someone else who swiped barcodes. We're not making this up…
–Tesco Value Baked Beans
– McVitiés Ginger Nuts
– Ribena 500ml



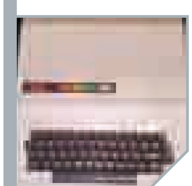
CASIO LOOPY
» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25**
More inanity from the land of the rising sun. This is a console designed especially for female gamers and it even allows stickers to be printed out…Casio hoped it would do better than their failed PV-1000 console released in 1983.



FAIRCHILD CHANNEL F
» YEAR **1976**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 (from the USA)**
The first commercially released console that used programmable cartridges. A real piece of history. Despite this, it's surprisingly cheap to purchase (although importing from the US may cost a fair amount).



COLECOVISION
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 standalone**
Coleco's third generation videogame system. Quite a few decent games, and considering its age it's a fairly powerful machine. Many of its arcade conversions were considered superior to the other systems on the market.
-CONGO BONGO
- SMURPH RESCUE
- CABBAGE PATCH KIDS



DRAGON 32/64
» YEAR **1982/3**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£8 (very cheap on eBay)**
Early British home computer that tried to cash in on the early 1980s boom. Short-lived though quite popular. The 64 model was released roughly a year after the 32.
- GRID RUNNER
- DEVIL ASSAULT
- CAVE FIGHTER



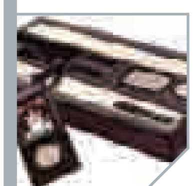
ARCADIA 2001
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**
Failed console by Emmerson, which had numerous different clones released as well.
- FUNKY FISH
- JUNGLER
- ROBOT ATTACK



EPOCH CASSETTE VISION
» YEAR **1981**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**
Obscure early Japanese console, which in 1983 had a budget 'Junior' model released.



EPOCH SUPER CASSETTE VISION
» YEAR **1984**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30**
Epoch's successor to the Cassette Vision, which was also marketed in Europe under the Yeno label. Apparently it only had around 30 games released for it.



INTELLIVISION
» YEAR **1980**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40 upwards depending on extras**
Developed by Mattel, the system was revolutionary. It was the first console to be technically 16-bit, go online (to download games), and it featured voice synthesis. Today it still has a strong retro following.
- FROG BOG
- ARMOR BATTLE
- LOCK 'N' CHASE



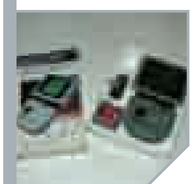
ODYSSEY
» YEAR **1972**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**
The original home videogame console, even before Atari got in on the act! Created by Ralph Baer, this is the ultimate piece of gaming history. Fortunately, it can be purchased relatively cheaply.



PLAYSTATION
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 depending on condition/model**
Another attempt by Sony to enter the videogame hardware market (after the MSX), this time they took over the market. There are countless undocumented yet excellent PS games. Was later re-released as the PSOne, which is more expensive, but looks much nicer in design.
- CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT
- FINAL FANTASY VII
- RIDGE RACER



SAM COUPE
» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 - £200 (allegedly for a mint complete system)**
Originally developed by Miles Gordon Technology in Swansea, the Sam Coupe was a unique 8-bit British home computer which didn't fare very well. It could even emulate the 48K Speccy to a degree.
- DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH
- ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE ROBOT MONSTERS
- PRINCE OF PERSIA



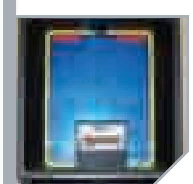
SUPERVISION
» YEAR **1992**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15**
Marketed by several different companies, this was essentially a cut price competitor to the monochrome Game Boy. Unsurprisngly, it was not manufactured for very long and is now hard to find.
- ALIEN
- HONEY BEE
- POLICE BUST



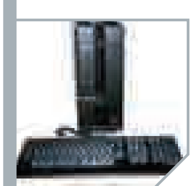
TIGER ELEC. GAME.COM
» YEAR **1997**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15**
Attempt by Tiger Electronics to compete against the Game Boy.
- RESIDENT EVIL 2
- SONIC JAM
- DUKE NUKEM 3D



TOMY TUTOR (MK1/JR/MK2)
» YEAR **1983/4**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**
Series of old computers by Tomy.



VECTREX (MB/GCE)
» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80**
The only home system ever to come with a vector display, enabling true vector graphics.
- SPACE WAR
- SPINBALL
- HYPERCHASE



X68000
» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£90 upwards**
Home computer by Sharp, released only in Japan. Famous for its arcade ports.
- CASTLEVANIA CHRONICLES
- STREET FIGHTER 2
- FINAL FIGHT

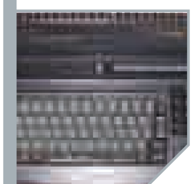
MSX



MSX 1
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 - £30**
An early attempt to create a standard gaming platform, fairly common in the UK.
- PENGUIN ADVENTURE
- KNIGHTMARE
- THE GOONIES



MSX 2
» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 - £50**
Updated and more powerful version of the MSX, very popular in Holland and Brazil where even today some excellent homebrew games are developed.
- METAL GEAR 2
- ALESTE 2
- VAMPIRE KILLER

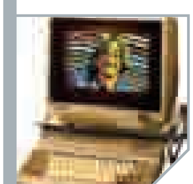


MSX 2+
» YEAR **1988**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 - £50**
Another hardware update that proved to be very popular in Holland.
- SPACE MANBOW
- GOLVELLIUS 2
- F1 SPIRIT 3D SPECIAL



MSX TURBO R
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 - £90**
A final and not very popular hardware update, that was virtually exclusive to Japan.
- FRAY
- PRINCESS MAKER
- ILLUSION CITY

NEC



PC-6### (ALSO MK II)
» YEAR **1984 onwards**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10-£50 depending on model**
Quite old 6000 series of home computers by NEC, with a lot of very cool Japanese games for it. Released in the USA as the NEC Trek. While fairly cheap, be careful of shipping prices.



PC-8801
» YEAR **1981 onwards**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 (cheap on Yahoo! Japan)**
Old computer series by NEC, with several different models over the years. Has surprisingly a massive roster of cool games, including the original *Silpheed*. While very cheap to buy online from Japan, shipping is expensive.



PC-9801
» YEAR **1983 onwards**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35 (cheap on Yahoo! Japan)**
Another home computer series by NEC, again with many great games. Laptop versions also exist. Most games by Falcom are worth watching out for.



PCFX
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 prices can fluctuate**
32-bit tower console by NEC, resembles a PC. Released in Japan only, had software support until 1998. Only a few action titles. Apparently, it also had quite a bit of hentai on it.
- LAST IMPERIAL PRINCE
- CHOUJIN HEIKI ZEROIGAR (SHMUP)
- ZENKI FX (FIGHTER)



PC-ENGINE
» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£55**
Classic piece of Japanese hardware from NEC which features many excellent arcade ports and a few exclusives. The CoreGrafx system is basically a PC-Engine with AV output.



PC-ENGINE GT
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£70 depending on extras**
Portable handheld version of the Japanese PC-Engine that played all Japanese Hu-Cards.



TURBO GRAFX-16
» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 (can be found quite cheap)**
American version of the PC-Engine. It has territory lockout, so the two system's Hu-Cards are not mutually compatible.



TURBO EXPRESS
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 (massive fluctuations)**
Portable handheld version of the American Turbo Grafx-16.
- BONK/PC KID SERIES
- BLOODY WOLF
- NINJA SPIRIT



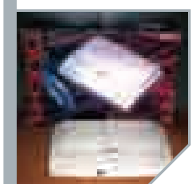
SUPER GRAFX
» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80 (prices can fluctuate)**
Meant to be the successor to the original PC-Engine, but sadly failed due to lack of games. It is backwards compatible, but only had 6 games specifically released for it.
- ALDYNES
- DARIUS PLUS
- GHOULS AND GHOSTS



PCE CD-ROM/ TURBO GRAFX CD
» YEAR **1988**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 upwards**
CD-ROM add-on for the PCE and TG16, released in 1988 and 1989. It has no region lockout.



PCE DUO/TURBO DUO
» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£120**
System that combines the PCE/TG16 with its CD add-on. Released in both Japan and America in 1991 and 1992. The CD games still have no region lockout.



DUO-R
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80**
Stripped down white version of the PCE Duo, without headphone port. Later in 1994 a Duo-RX version was released, slightly blue in colour and came with a 6 button control pad.
- DRACULA X
- SHUBIBINMAN 3
- LORDS OF THUNDER

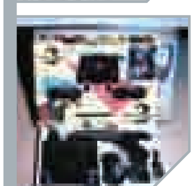
NINTENDO



FAMICOM
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£60**
Nintendo's first foray into the home console market, with over a 1000 games to choose from!



FAMICOM AV
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40**
A cheaper remodelled version of the Famicom, now with AV output.



FAMICLONE
» YEAR **N/A**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**
Mass produced pirate versions of the Famicom system. Virtually infinite different designs.
- CRISIS FORCE
- SWEET HOME
- HAUNG DI



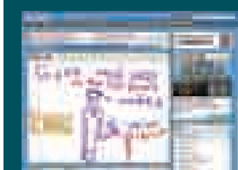
FAMICOM DISK SYSTEM
» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£70**
Nintendo's attempt to bring cheap rewritable disk based gaming to the masses. Be warned, the drive belts break very easily.

RETRO GAMING SITES

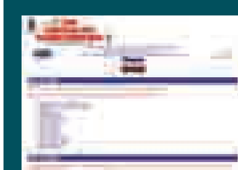
WORLD OF SPECTRUM
Love everything about Sir Clive's wonderful 8-bit wonder? Then head over to the World of Spectrum and discover one of the most dedicated gaming sites around. You can even play certain games online…
www.worldofspectrum.org



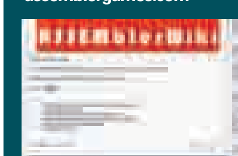
LEMON64
Lemon64 is dedicated to all things Commodore64 and is a valuable resource to both hardcore owners and those who have only just discovered the machine.
www.lemon64.com

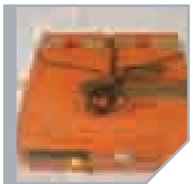


THE AMSTRAD CPC GAME RESOURCE
Considering we've drawn attention to two of the best sites for the C64 and Spectrum, it's only fair that we do the same for the humble Amstrad. If you don't care for chunky pixels or colour clash then head here.
http://tacgr.emuunlim.com/



ASSEMBLER
Last month's 'Website of the month' has finally received a brand new look and update and now features a superb Wikipedia containing all sorts of fascinating information. Plenty of obscure prototypes can be discovered, so what are you waiting for?
http://www.assemblergames.com





SHARP FAMICOM TWIN
» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100**
Combined Famicom and Disk System, by Sharp. Comes in two colours, black and pink.
- OTOCKY
- NAZO NO MURASAMEJOU
- PATLABOR



GAME&WATCH
» YEAR **1980-1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£1 - £200**
Series of small handheld LCD games that were created by the legendary Gunpei Yoko.



GAME BOY B/W
» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£5**
Nintendo's original handheld portable, with interchangeable cartridges. Despite it's age, and monochrome display, there are many excellent classic GB games.



GAME BOY POCKET
» YEAR **1996**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£8**
A smaller and more compact GB, with improved screen. A Japanese version with built-in light was released and sells for a much higher price.
- SUPER MARIO LAND
- TETRIS
- POKÉMON



GAME BOY COLOR
» YEAR **1998**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£12**
Colour-based version of the classic GB. Backwards compatible, but it also has several exclusive games that were rather special.
- METAL GEAR SOLID: GHOST BABEL
- RESIDENT EVIL GAIDEN
- HARVEST MOON 3



GAME BOY ADVANCE
» YEAR **2001**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25**



N64
» YEAR **1996**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**
Nintendo's last cartridge based console, competitor to the Playstation and Saturn. Has several highly sought after classics. Some games (like Donkey Kong) require the RAM expansion pack and wouldn't run without it.
- SIN & PUNISHMENT
- PILOTWINGS 64
- BLAST CORPS



N64 DD
» YEAR **1999**
» » RARITY
» PRICE **£150 and upwards!**
Another attempt by Nintendo to incorporate disc media with one of their cartridge based consoles. Expensive and very few games were released.
- F-ZERO EXPANSION KIT
- MARIO ARTIST SERIES
- DOSHIN THE GIANT



NES (TOASTER)
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15**
The Western version of the Famicom, popular the world over. Plenty of great Nintendo classics to choose from, and very cheap too.



NES (DOG BONE)
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50**
Remodelled and improved version of the traditional NES. Region lockout was also removed, meaning all 72 pin based NES games work.
- VICE: PROJECT DOOM
- SNAKE'S REVENGE
- SUPER MARIO BROS. 3



SNES (SUPER FAMICOM IN JAPAN)
» YEAR **1990**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**
Nintendo's successor to the NES, and one of their most popular machines. A retro staple with a fantastic selection of games.



SNES 2 (KNOWN AS 'JR' IN JPN)
» YEAR **1997**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 - £100**
Cheaper and redesigned SNES.
- SUPER METROID
- SECRET OF MANA
- SUPER MARIO WORLD



VIRTUAL BOY
» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80**
Nintendo's failed attempt at a pseudo Virtual Reality games system. Quite a novelty as there is nothing else like it. Be warned though, as many gamers have complained that the machine gives them headaches.
- INSMOUSE NO YAKATA (HP LOVECRAFT INSPIRED FPS)
- WARIO LAND
- RED ALARM

PHILIPS



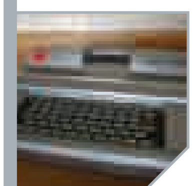
CD-I 205/210/220
» YEAR **from1992**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 (more with Digital Video Card)**
Unique system by Philips.The 200 series consists of front loading systems, with each one having slightly different specifications.



CD-I 450/490/740
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30 (more with DVC)**
Consolised version of previous models, requires a different '9956' DVC.
- THE APPRENTICE
- BURN CYCLE
- HOTEL MARIO



VIDEOPAC G7000
» YEAR **1978**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**
Popular across the world (especially Brazil and Holland) and known also as the 'Odyssey 2'.



VIDEOPAC G7400
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**
A successor to the G7000, that was backwards compatible.
- QUEST FOR RINGS
- PICKAXE PETE
- MUNCHKIN

SEGA



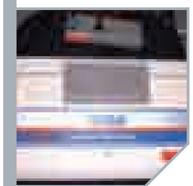
32X
» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35 (must have RF + Mains)**
Failed Mega Drive add-on, designed to enhance the it's capabilities.
- KNUCKLES CHAOTIX
- KOLIBRI
- DARXIDE



DREAMCAST
» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£25 depending on extras**
Sega's final hardware release. No gamer should be without it. Amazing official roster of games, plus it can emulate older systems.
- IKARUGA
- CRAZY TAXI
- REZ



GAME GEAR
» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£15 more with extras**
Handheld by Sega, designed to compete against the Game Boy. Low battery life, but effectively a portable Master System. Could also be used as a TV (as shown here).
- SHINOBI 2
- COLUMNS
- TV TUNER



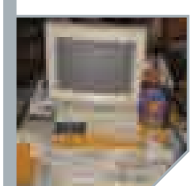
SG-1000 (PLUS THE MARK II AND III)
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20-£50**
Sega's first console, and a piece of history! The Mark III model would later be redesigned to become the Master System. Like the Japanese Famicom, it's much nicer than the UK version.



SC-3000
» YEAR **1983**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx. £50**
Computer equivalent of the SG-1000, also by Sega. Was popular in Australia and other ex-colonies. Mutually compatible with the SG-1000 as well.



MASTER SYSTEM I/II
» YEAR **1985**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10 with leads etc.**
Popular Sega 8-bit console, which competed against the NES. Adapted from previous systems.
- PHANTASY STAR
- WONDER BOY 3: DRAGON'S TRAP
- NINJA GAIDEN



AMSTRAD MEGA PC
» YEAR **1993**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10.50 (according to eBay)**
A strange hybrid between an Amstrad PC and a Mega Drive. A nice collectable oddity, though according to past eBay auctions, not a high seller.



TERADRIVE
» YEAR **1991**
» » RARITY
» PRICE **Approx. £100**
Another Mega Drive computer

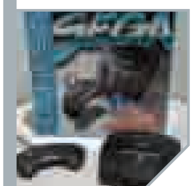
hybrid. Released earlier than the Amstrad hybrid, these systems have no connection. Due to being exclusive to Japan, they are seldom seen in the wild. Likely to be very expensive if you are able to find one.



MEGA DRIVE/ GENESIS I/II

» YEAR **1989+**
» RARITY
» » PRICE **£10 depending on model**

The big daddy, Sega's most successful console and a retro classic.



GENESIS 3

» YEAR **1998**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35**

Developed by Majesco. This third, cut-down model is rarer and has some compatibility issues. USA only.

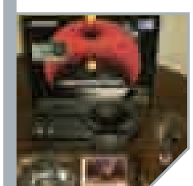


NOMAD

» YEAR **1995**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100**

Handheld Mega Drive. Pricey, low battery life and some compatibility problems.

- RANGER-X
- THUNDER FORCE IV
- COMIX ZONE



MULTIMEGA/ WONDERMEGA/

» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100+ depending on system**

CDX/Xeye

A series of different hybrid MD and MCD systems, released in the three main territories.



MEGA CD (SCD) I/II

» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£50 depending on system**

Sega's CD add-on for the Mega Drive. Despite heavy criticism, has many excellent games .

- POPFUL MAIL
- SNATCHER
- SONIC CD



PICO

» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20 (more with games)**

Toy computer released for young children. The games come in nice storybook style boxes.

- SONIC'S GAMEWORLD
- ECCO JR. AND THE GREAT OCEAN HUNT
- THE LION KING: ADVENTURES AT PRIDE ROCK



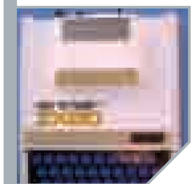
SATURN

» YEAR **1994**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£30**

Sega's competition against the PlayStation and N64. A real 2D powerhouse, that despite an amazing catalogue of games never really took off.

- SATURN BOMBERMAN
- GUARDIAN HEROES
- DRAGON FORCE

SINCLAIR



ZX-80

» YEAR **1980**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£200 Apparently if boxed and mint**

Very early British home computer from Sinclair. Low capability meant limited gaming possibilities. Now extremely hard to get hold of.

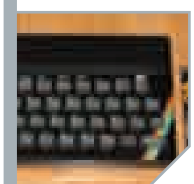


ZX-81

» YEAR **1981**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx. £70 if mint**

Improved home computer from Sinclair, with black and white ASCII graphics. Not as hard to source as a ZX-80, but still commands a respectable price.

- 3D MONSTER MAZE
- MAZOGS
-SABOTAGE



ZX SPECTRUM 48K

» YEAR **1982**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£10**



ZX SPECTRUM 128K

» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40**



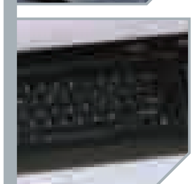
ZX SPECTRUM

» YEAR **1984**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35**



ZX SPECTRUM +2

» YEAR **1986**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35**



ZX SPECTRUM +3

» YEAR **1987**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£40**

The British classic loved by many. A vast improvement over previous Sinclair computers, it was normally compared against the C64 and Amstrad home computers, which in turn caused many play ground arguments over who had the better machine.

- HEAD OVER HEELS
- 3D DEATHCHASE
- SKOOL DAZE

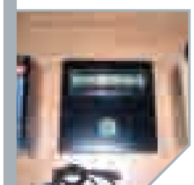
SNK



NEOGEO AES

» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£150 and upwards**

High powered home system by SNK. Features many high quality arcade games. Sadly, due to the high price of the original games, many titles are now ridiculously expensive to purchase.



NEOGEO MVS

» YEAR **1989**
» RARITY
» PRICE **Approx. £70 (multi-slot systems cost more)**

High powered arcade system by SNK, which many people prefer over the home based AES due to lower pricing of games. (The majority of NeoGeo titles appeared on both systems, or alternatively can be converted).

- METAL SLUG
- KING OF FIGHTERS ##
- WAKU WAKU 7



NEOGEO CD

» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£100 varies**

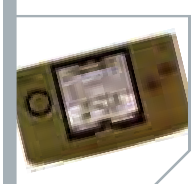


NEOGEO CDZ

» YEAR **1991**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£80 varies**

CD-based NeoGeo systems, an attempt by SNK to lower the cost of NeoGeo games. The CDZ is cheaper and has slightly improved loading times. Most CD titles are ports from the AES/MVS.

- VIEWPOINT
- AGGRESSORS OF DARK COMBAT
- SAMURAI SHOWDOWN RPG



NEOGEO POCKET (B/W)

» YEAR **1998**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£20**



NEOGEO POCKET COLOR

» YEAR **1999**
» RARITY
» PRICE **£35**

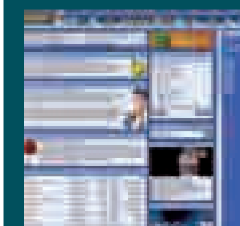
Handheld NeoGeo systems by SNK, that sadly failed in competing against the Game Boy, despite featuring some great games. Still a wonderful little system though. Be sure to buy the later colour screen model.

- FASELEI!
- CARD FIGHTERS (CAPCOM/SNK)
- MATCH OF THE MILLENNIUM (CAP VS SNK)

RETRO GAMING SITES

LEMON AMIGA

Kim Lemon's excellent Commodore 64 website Lemon 64 is well documented and it's looking like sister site Lemon Amiga will be just as popular. Our favourite part of the site is Lemonade, a great Frontend program for the Amiga emulator WinUAE that allows you to browse a massive database of Amiga games. Essential. **http://www.lemonamiga.com**



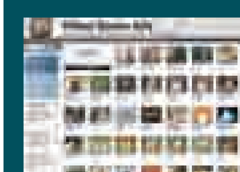
RETROSPEC: RETROGAMING AT ITS BEST

We're huge fans of remakes and Retrospec features some of the best around. Our personal favourite is *Head Over Heels*, but with the newly released *Exolon DS, Cybernoid II, Blazin' Trails* (and many more wonderful retro remakes to choose from) this site should keep you busy. **http://retrospec.sgn.net/**



VIDEO GAME ADS

Okay, some of the ads here are for the current generation of consoles, but if you do a bit of digging then you should be able to find some gems on offer. Check out the NES ads for the original *Legend of Zelda*. Priceless. **http://gameads.gamepressure.com**

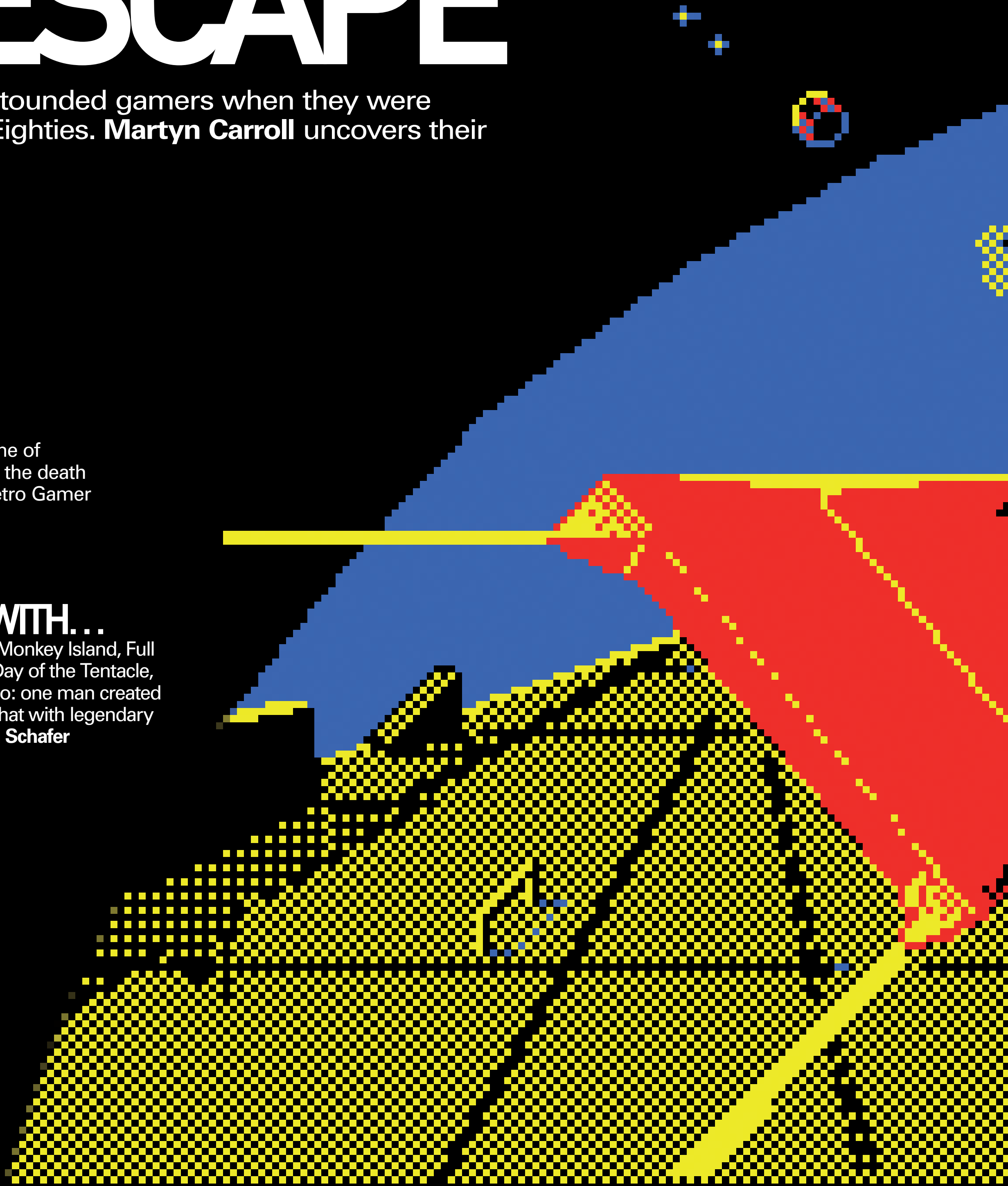


THE COMPLETE LOWDOWN



FREESCAPE

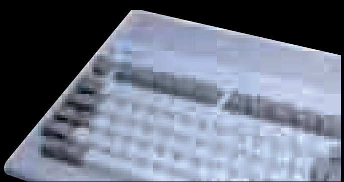
The Freescape games astounded gamers when they were first released in the late Eighties. **Martyn Carroll** uncovers their fascinating history



THE MAKING OF…

Sam & Max Hit the Road is one of the funniest games ever made. We talk to its creator, **Steve Purcell**, to discover what made it one of the funniest videogames ever





RETROINSPECTION

The Amiga 1200 should have been one of Commodore's greatest triumphs, but the death of Commodore proved otherwise. Retro Gamer charts its story next month



IN THE CHAIR WITH…

The Secret of Monkey Island, Full Throttle, The Day of the Tentacle, Grim Fandango: one man created them all. We chat with legendary developer **Tim Schafer**

THE MAKING OF…

Dragon's Lair is one of the most remembered laser disc games of all time. Retro Gamer talks to its creator **Rick Dyer** to find out why it's so revered





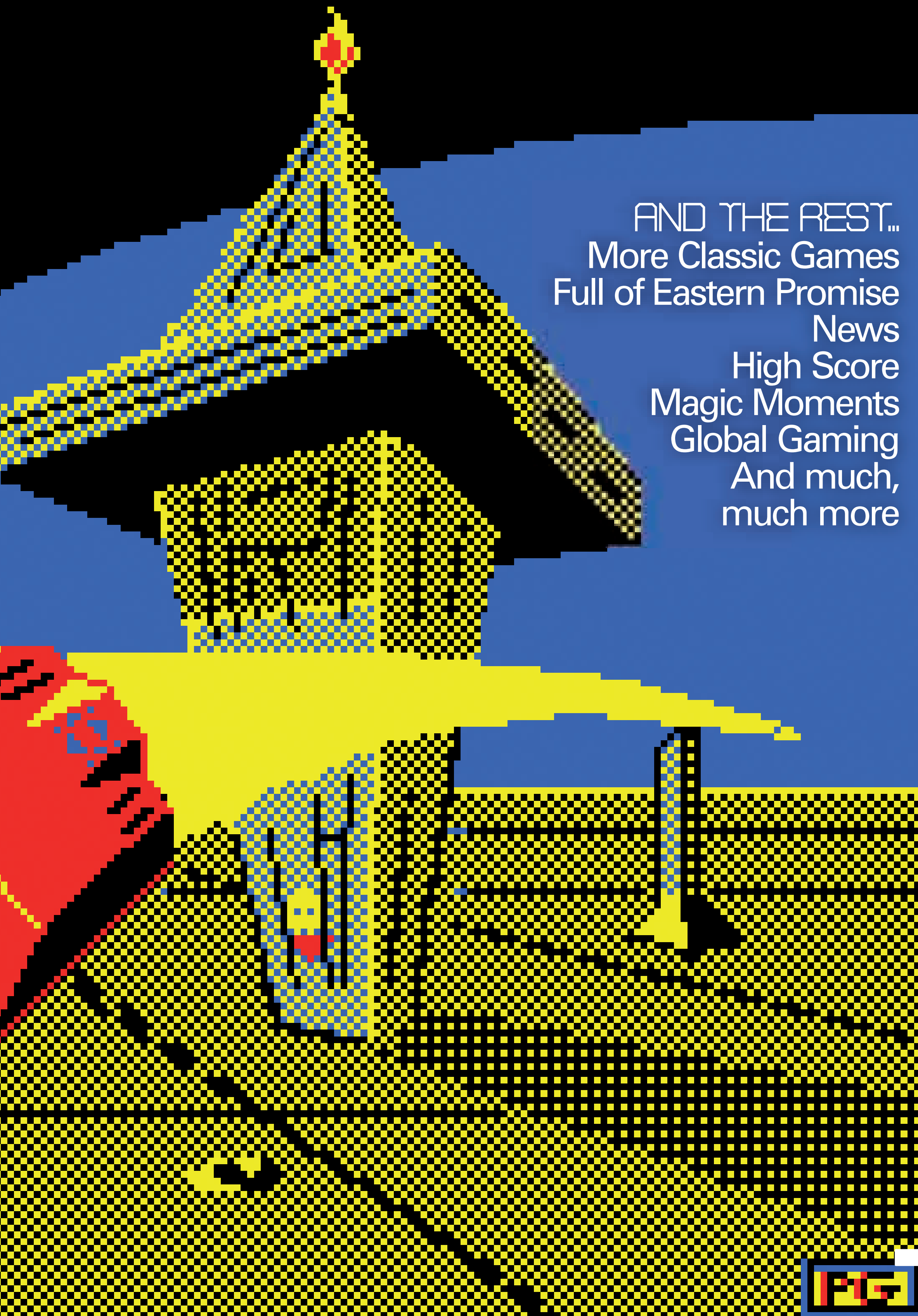
COMPANY PROFILE

US Gold released a string of hits (and a fair few stinkers) in its 12-year history – find out how it all ended next month



EMULATION NATION

If you were an Amiga owner then the chances are you were well aware of the thriving demo scene. We look back at why it was vital to the Amiga's success



AND THE REST...

More Classic Games
Full of Eastern Promise
News
High Score
Magic Moments
Global Gaming
And much, much more

NEXT MONTH

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retro GAMER
BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO CLASSIC GAMES

END/GAME



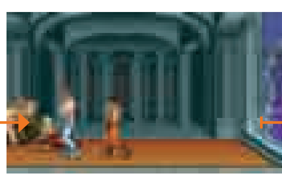
FINAL FIGHT

For many, Final Fight remains the definitive side-scrolling beat-'em-up thanks to its strong level design, decent range of weapons and great characters. After battling through six levels of the lowliest scum that Metro City has to offer, Haggar, Guy and Cody finally approach their showdown with Mad Gear's big cheese. Will they be successful?



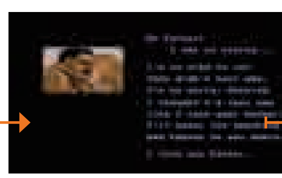
SCREEN 1

Wheeling Jessica in on a personalised wheelchair, the head of Mad Gear finally reveals himself – and boy, is he one ugly sod!
After having his wheelchair smashed up by an enraged Cody, Belwer (who no doubt will add disability fraud to his list of crimes) opens fire with a nasty customised crossbow.



SCREEN 2

Seeing his beloved Jessica slumped on the floor he immediately starts giving Belwer a damn good hiding.
Such is Cody's fury a final punch sends the doomed Belwer through a nearby window and straight to the pavement – several feet below (no doubt to land on a handy car). Just in time for the obligatory happy reunion…



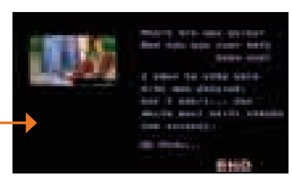
SCREEN 3

A touching scene (complete with horribly twee music) plays out, where Jessica professes her love for her father and Haggar promises that nothing will ever happen to his daughter again.
God we're a sucker for happy endings, but this one had us reaching for the sick bucket. And we thought the Blanka reunion in *Street Fighter II* was bad…



SCREEN 4

Meanwhile, Cody is preparing to walk away from the girl of his dreams with best mate Guy, but is stopped short when she calls after him.
Caught off-guard, Cody's suddenly beaten to the floor by best mate Guy (unsurprising really, as Guy was due to appear in the first *Street Fighter* tournament but quit to help his friend).



SCREEN 5

A tearful Jessica begs Cody to stay with her forever but her beau declines and vows that as long as evil is on the streets he'll be there to clean it up. Goodbyes are said and Cody and Guy go on to guest star in several *Street Fighter* games.
Honestly, it makes you wonder why they even bothered going after her in the first place.